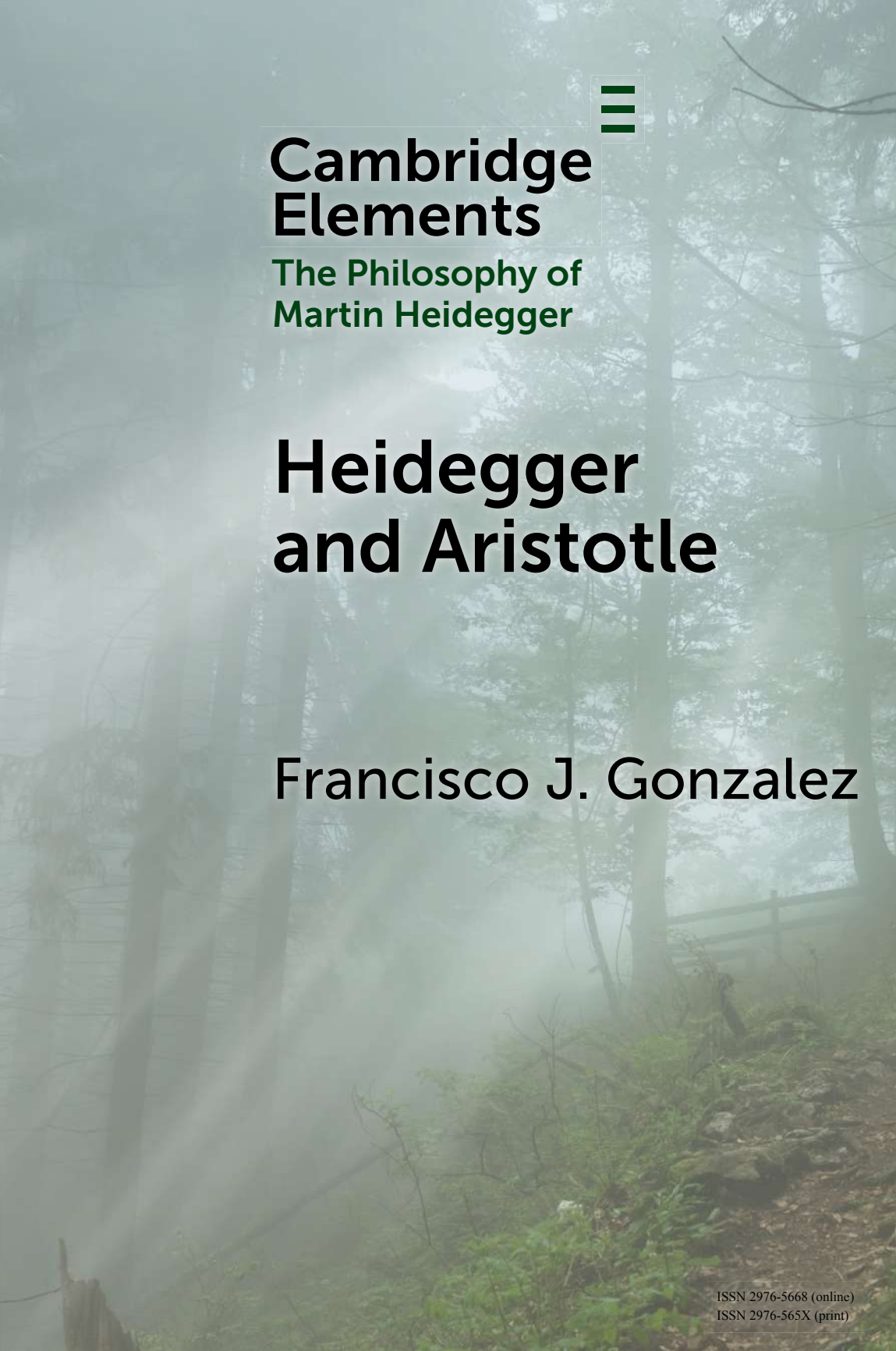

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Heidegger and Aristotle

Francisco J. Gonzalez

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HEIDEGGER AND ARISTOTLE

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Heidegger and Aristotle

Elements in the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger

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Abstract: Since Heidegger's reading of Aristotle covered three decades and presented itself in many courses, seminars, and essays, some still unpublished, one objective here is to provide a much needed and currently unavailable overview of this material. This Element seeks to determine what Heidegger's reading can tell us not only about Aristotle but also about Heidegger whose own thought was in many ways a "repetition" of Aristotle. However, the ultimate aim is to identify the philosophical questions raised by "Heidegger and Aristotle" and show how this "and" can help us grapple with them. These questions include the distinctive way of being that defines life, the nature of time and specifically lived time, the nature of being itself and whether it is to be understood as static presence or as something more active, the nature of human action and its relation to production, and the relation between nature and technology.

Keywords: Heidegger, Aristotle, Ontology, Physics, Hermeneutics

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Preface

The goal of the present *Element* is to provide the reader with an introduction, but a thorough and comprehensive one, to the topic of "Heidegger and Aristotle." It aims to be comprehensive in (1) identifying the central questions at issue in the confrontation between Heidegger and Aristotle, as regards each of them individually and the topics they both address, (2) in providing the most complete survey currently possible of all of Heidegger's seminars, courses, and essays on Aristotle, both published and unpublished, and (3) in providing a more comprehensive bibliography than found elsewhere of the secondary literature on Heidegger and Aristotle. It is introductory in providing the above only as tools for further research in the area and in also reflecting on how we are to approach, read, and assess Heidegger's interpretations of Aristotle.

The comprehensiveness is important because the full significance of Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle appears only when we have in view the full scope of his engagement, rather than focusing on only one or two texts. The introductory and methodological reflections are needed to avoid two natural but equally misguided approaches to the topic. One is to see Heidegger's readings as just another interpretation of Aristotle to be added to Aristotelian scholarship, usually with the criticism that Heidegger's readings are bad because not sufficiently faithful to the text. The other tendency is to see Heidegger's readings as not meant to tell us anything about Aristotle, but as only using Aristotle's texts violently to develop his own contemporary philosophy. What we see Heidegger *actually* doing when we have in view his full engagement with Aristotle is neither the one nor the other, but something else much more interesting and more rewarding: something simultaneously more historical (even "philological") and more radically original.

Modest as it is, the present *Element* would not have been possible without over a decade of work on the topic funded by grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. This funding enabled me to work on student transcripts for many unpublished seminars on Aristotle by Heidegger as preserved in the papers of Heidegger's student, Helene Weiss, currently housed at Stanford University. These early seminars from the 1920s, with their focus on specific Aristotelian texts, proved crucial for understanding the origins and motives of Heidegger's decades-long engagement with Aristotle. My reconstruction of these seminars along with commentary has been recently published (Gonzalez 2024a) and serves as an important research base for part of the present introduction.

This introduction is especially needed now. With the unpublished seminars being now currently available for study in one form or another, in addition to all the texts on Aristotle projected for publication in the *Gesamtausgabe* having now been published, we find ourselves at the start of a new phase of research and philosophical reflection on the topic of Heidegger and Aristotle. It is now necessary to survey all the material currently at our disposal and reflect on how we are to approach it: with what questions and what expectations. This is the goal the present *Element* is meant to serve.

1 The Significance of the Philosophical Constellation "Heidegger and Aristotle"

What is the meaning of the title: *Heidegger and Aristotle*? This question is harder to answer than might appear. We can start by ruling out some possible answers. One thing that is not meant is a comparative study of the work of Heidegger and Aristotle. This is because their works do not stand independently, side by side, for comparison. Rather, Heidegger dedicated much of his own work to the reading and interpretation of Aristotle's work. But the title is also not to be understood as meaning "Heidegger *on* Aristotle." This is because we misunderstand what Heidegger is doing in his interpretations if we understand him as simply contributing to the literature on Aristotle. His aim is not to provide yet another reading that seeks to get Aristotle right against other ones. Instead, he seeks to appropriate Aristotle's thought for his own thinking while performing a "destruction" of the traditional reception of Aristotle. But then it would also be wrong to think that the present work is simply on Heidegger, with his violent readings of Aristotle serving only to illuminate his own thought. Heidegger, especially in his smaller seminars, reads Aristotle's texts with great care in the original Greek, even taking positions on different manuscript readings when necessary. Furthermore, he always showed a desire to *understand* and *learn* from Aristotle, rather than simply making him say whatever he wanted to make him say. If Aristotelian philosophy played a central role in Heidegger's own thought, it is because Heidegger took so much from Aristotle, not because he simply created a new Aristotle in his own image. Rather than using Aristotle for his own purposes, his purposes were partly shaped by Aristotle.[1]

[1] This is presumably why, in describing his different influences and their kind of influence in the 1923 course *Ontology: Hermeneutics of Facticity*, Heidegger calls Aristotle his *model* (*Vorbild*; GA63, 5).

At this point we might be tempted to understand the title to mean "Heidegger as influenced by Aristotle" (clearly not the other way around!). But this too is wrong. The reason is that the Aristotle that influences and shapes Heidegger's own thought is, if not simply a violent creation by Heidegger, still an Aristotle that Heidegger first gives voice to, *a possibility* that Heidegger uncovers from Aristotle's texts. As H.-G. Gadamer reports, the students of Heidegger's seminars could often not tell if it was Heidegger or Aristotle speaking to them. This is because it was *inseparably both*: Heidegger speaking through Aristotle *and* Aristotle speaking through Heidegger. If the students also saw Heidegger as an Aristotle *redivivus*, an Aristotle *redivivus* is not *simply* Aristotle, but *another* Aristotle, a *new* Aristotle, *and yet Aristotle*.[2]

For these reasons, the "and" in the title *Heidegger and Aristotle* is best understood as a *dialogical relation*: neither the selfless repetition of "what Aristotle said" nor the violent appropriation of Aristotle for Heideggerian philosophy, neither Heidegger speaking as Aristotle nor Aristotle speaking as Heidegger, but a relation in which both voices are preserved in their confrontation. That it was Heidegger reading Aristotle and not the other way around does not undermine the possibility of such dialogue. Aristotle still speaks through his texts and thereby has the power not only to resist Heideggerian interpretations, but even to raise fundamental questions about Heidegger's own thought. When the relation *Heidegger and Aristotle* is understood in this way, it holds the possibility of providing us with a better understanding of *both* Heidegger *and* Aristotle. We can arrive at a deeper understanding of Heidegger from how he reads Aristotle, but we can also arrive at a deeper understanding of Aristotle from how he is read by Heidegger. Furthermore, understood dialogically, the "and" provides a space *between* Aristotle and Heidegger from which we can judge *the limitations of both*. Heidegger's "destruction" of Aristotle can certainly expose limitations in the thought of the latter, but what Heidegger's appropriation of Aristotle must suppress or cover over (such as, we will see, the distinction between *praxis* and *poiêsis*) can expose his own limitations. But this also means that if we in reading Heidegger's readings of Aristotle situate ourselves in a dialogical middle between them, playing them off each other, we can hope to gain insight into the philosophical issues themselves at stake in this dialogue. This means that the major interest of *Heidegger*

[2] In H.-G. Gadamer's "Autobiographical Reflections": in Palmer 2007, 13. See also the 1986 text "Vom Anfang des Denkens," in GW3, 389–390, and Gadamer's essay in Heidegger 2002, 77: "Aristotle began truly to speak to us in our present."

and Aristotle is not historical (what Heidegger had to say about Aristotle or how Aristotle influenced Heidegger), but *philosophical*. In introducing the topic of Heidegger and Aristotle, the present *Elements* is intended ultimately as a handbook for doing philosophy *between* Heidegger and Aristotle and thus both with and against them.

Details on Heidegger's reading of Aristotle will be provided in the next section, but here an overview and some contextualization will be useful. One thing that distinguishes Heidegger among the major thinkers in the history of philosophy is the extent and depth of his engagement with other thinkers. Heidegger published only one book of systematic philosophy, *Being and Time*, and the second part of even that work, never published, was to carry out an interpretation of Kant, Descartes, and Aristotle with the aim of a "phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology." If we look at his courses, only a few of which were published in book form during his lifetime, as well as his essays and lectures, most of them are dedicated to the interpretation of other philosophers. Of course, "interpretation" must be understood in the very specific sense suggested by the phrase "phenomenological destruction." What Heidegger seeks to "destroy" in reading thinkers of the past is not so much their own thinking as rather the traditional reception of their thinking, and this with the positive aim of liberating within their works possibilities of thinking that have been covered up or suppressed by their reception. Heidegger's relation to the history of philosophy is "repetition" (*Wiederholung*) in the sense he gives this word in *Being and Time* to describe an authentic relation to the past: The aim is neither to abandon oneself to the past nor to progress beyond it, but rather to project into the *future* the possibilities that the past *has handed down to us* (see SZ 385). For Heidegger, thinkers of the past cannot be treated as our contemporaries, since this would assume wrongly that the problems and questions at issue are ahistorical, but they can and should be made to speak to us in a way that furthers our own thinking. This historical reflection is not only an optional aid within philosophy but also a necessity, since the only other option is to repeat the past thoughtlessly in a way that stifles the future of thought. For Heidegger, the kind of "progress" that claims to leave the past behind is only a blind repetition of the past. The genuine future of philosophy must always lie in its past. As Heidegger claims in a seminar from 1922–23, "Radical philosophy is *eo ipso* historical" (WUPIA, 2).

Even in this context, however, Aristotle has a special place. Heidegger engaged with other philosophers intensely at certain periods along his way: Kant and Hegel in the period of *Being and Time* and immediately following;

Plato and Nietzsche during the 1930s, though one Platonic dialogue (the *Sophist*) received substantial discussion in the 1920s. But Aristotle is the only thinker with whom Heidegger remained deeply engaged during all periods: during the 1920s before *Being and Time*; immediately after *Being and Time* and during the 1930s; during the war and in the final decade of teaching after the war. Part of the reason, of course, is the foundational importance of Aristotle in shaping the Western philosophical tradition. But this is not the only or even the main reason. If a "destruction" of the history of ontology always had to go through Aristotle, it is also the case that Heidegger found in Aristotle, when liberated from the tradition, resources for his own project of thinking Being that he did not find in any other thinker. Heidegger's thought was in *constant* dialogue with Aristotle. *Being and Time*, originally projected as a book on Aristotle, was clearly a "repetition" of Aristotle in the sense defined previously; but the same could be said of Heidegger's thought even after *Being and Time*.

As will be seen in the next section, Heidegger's turn to Aristotle was not immediate. But once he offers his first independent seminar on Aristotle in SS1921, the Greek philosopher comes to dominate his courses and seminars throughout the 1920s. Not only that, but less than a year transpires between that first seminar and Heidegger's decision to dedicate his first book to Aristotle. That book project, outlined and already in progress in 1922, is not abandoned until 1925 when it is replaced by the project of *Being and Time* (though both projects, as we will see, are essentially one). Yet the teaching of Aristotle does not stop with the abandonment of the book project or the publication of *Being and Time*. The only thing that puts a temporary pause to it is Heidegger's prohibition from teaching after the war due to his involvement with National Socialism. As soon as he is permitted to teach again in the winter semester of 1950–51, the first seminar he teaches is on Aristotle followed by two more in the immediately following semesters. Furthermore, as we will see, the specific Aristotelian texts that interest him and the questions he brings to them remain essentially the same as before the war. Given the significant transformations that Heidegger's thought underwent during these decades, including the famous "turn" after *Being and Time*, Aristotle seems to be one constant.

What then drew Heidegger to Aristotle and kept him so intensely engaged with him? One might think that it was the question of being. Aristotle is the philosopher who first defined a science of τὸ ὄν ᾗ ὄν, "being(s) insofar as being(s)" (the ambiguity here between "being" and "beings" will be highlighted by Heidegger). He also articulated for the first time the "plurivocity" of being, that is, that being is spoken of in different ways

(τὸ ὄν πολλαχῶς λεγόμενον), and indeed a double plurivocity: Being not only has the different senses of "substance," "quality," "quantity," "relation," and so on according to the different categories, but being according to the categories itself is distinct from being in the sense of "being coincidentally" (*sumbebêkos*), "being true" (*alêthes*), and being "actively" or "potentially" (in *energeia* or in *dunamis*). Aristotle thus made unavoidable the question of the relation between these different senses of being and thereby rendered the meaning of being for the first time an explicit *problem* (despite anticipations of the problem in Plato). Since Heidegger's first book was an attempt to raise the question of being, that is, to *retrieve it explicitly* after it had been *forgotten* (see Section 1 of *Being and Time*), and since this question continues to occupy him, in one form or another, for the rest of his life, we seem to have here the explanation of his continual engagement with Aristotle.

As we will see, Heidegger did comment several times on the early chapters of *Metaphysics* IV where Aristotle introduces the science of being and raises the problem of the different senses of being according to the categories, as well as on *Metaphysics* VI where Aristotle addresses the broader plurivocity that includes being in the sense of the categories with other senses of being. However, these are *not* the texts with which Heidegger's intensive engagement with Aristotle during the 1920s begins nor the texts to which he repeatedly returns. What is more, a constant trait of Heidegger's reading of Aristotle is his *demotion* of the *Metaphysics*, with its science of the different senses of being, to a status of less importance than the text that assumes absolute centrality in his reading and that he consistently asserts to be Aristotle's fundamental work of ontology: the *Physics*. It is in this text that we must seek the main reason for Heidegger's intensive engagement with Aristotle.

The central topic of the *Physics* is of course *phusis*: "nature," though Heidegger will always understand "nature" here in the broadest sense possible, as when we speak of "the nature of X" to mean "the being or essence of X." But more specifically, the topic of the *Physics* is the phenomenon that is central to the very being of *phusis: movement* (*kinêsis*). The *Physics* for Heidegger is an ontology of movement both in the sense that it is concerned with understanding the *being of* movement, and in the sense that it takes movement to define either a particular region of being (if we understand "nature" narrowly) or being as such (if we understand nature broadly, as Heidegger does). But why this interest in the being of movement and the movement of being? The answer is to be found in the other texts to which Heidegger is drawn at the start: *De Anima* and

the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In the first text, Heidegger seeks an *ontology of life*, whereas in the second, to which his reading of *De Anima* naturally leads, he seeks an ontology specifically of *human life*. But how do we even approach understanding the being of the phenomenon of (human) life? Clearly, life is not some static object, so that we lose it as a phenomenon if we impose upon it a conception of being as constant presence. Instead, life is a peculiar sort of *movement* and we therefore cannot understand its being without understanding the being of movement. *De Anima* and the ontology of life that it pursues can be understood only from the perspective of the *Physics* and its ontology of movement.

The problem with which Heidegger struggles in the courses immediately preceding his turn to Aristotle is not what he will later call the question of the meaning of being in general, but rather the possibility of phenomenology as a *fundamental science of life* (*Urwissenschaft des Lebens*). This is a problem because of the tension between the objectifying tendency of science and the fact that life, understood as the life that we ourselves live in the world with others (life as what Heidegger at the time calls *Selbstwelt*, *Umwelt*, and *Mitwelt*) is not an object. As he asks in the first *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* course of 1919/1920: "How can we wish to establish a strict science in this constantly flowing fullness of living and worlding [Welten]?" (GA58, 37–38) Later in the course he asks even more forcefully,

> whether science can at all grasp and express life, so that life in its 'liveness' [Lebendigkeit] comes adequately and unsullied to expression, so that one could already ask whether the idea of phenomenology as the original *science* [Ursprungs*wissenschaft*] of life-as most radical and strictest science-is not in itself absurd, insofar as a most radical and strictest science of life must most radically imprison it in the tendency of *objectifying* scientific *draining of life* [*Entlebung*], must suppress most radically and recklessly all living relations, so that the question remains of what possible sense it could make to speak of a science of life (78–79).[3]

In this context, it becomes perfectly understandable why the first Aristotelian text to which Heidegger should turn a little over a year later is the one in which he sees Aristotle undertaking an ontology of life or a "psychology" that does not objectify the self in the way that modern

[3] Heidegger was struggling with the same kind of problem in the war emergency semester of 1919: speaking of the "psychical," he asks: "How is a science to be built on this? … A science of lived experiences [Erlebnissen] would therefore need to objectify [vergegenständlichen, objektivieren] them, i.e. to rid them precisely of their character of being lived and being an event rather than an object [ihres nicht objektartigen Er-lebnis- und Ereignischarakters entkleiden]" (GA56/57, 76).

psychology does (see 92, 98–99, and 216). Since Heidegger in the 1919/20 course concludes that a phenomenology of life is impossible except through the negation and critical destruction of the objectifications that cover it over, his first intention in turning to Aristotle might have been the mainly critical one of destroying the objectifying and theorizing tendencies of the philosophical tradition, but then what he found in Aristotle was a phenomenological method much more akin to his own. Furthermore, if the challenge for Heidegger was understanding life in its *movement*, he could not have failed to be positively impressed by the centrality Aristotle accorded to the phenomenon of movement.

Before turning to Aristotle, however, Heidegger turned to the expression of life in its facticity he found in early Christianity. In the course on "The Phenomenology of Religious Life" from WS1920–21, Heidegger is still concerned with philosophy as springing from factical life experience and *returning to it* (GA60, 8), but he also highlights another aspect of life that resists theoretical objectification: its *historical character*. He observes: "We seek to understand troubled Dasein from out of our own life experience. How does our own living Dasein as troubled by history relate itself to history? How does factical life *from itself* stand in relation to history?" (52–53). In the second half of the course, Heidegger examines how *Christian* life expresses itself historically in Paul's letters to the Galatians and the Thessalonians, with the goal of freeing early Christian experience from the Scholastic and indeed Aristotelian conceptuality later imposed upon it. But this reading, while rich in phenomenal content and helping us to see the historical, temporal character of life against its objectifications, still leaves unsolved the methodological problem of how to interpret life *philosophically* in its *movement*. To deal with this problem, we must seek within the very philosophical tradition that distorted and covered up early Christian experience, that is, within Aristotelianism, the hidden resources for grasping life as life (especially since, as we will see in the next section, Heidegger comes to recognize that Christian experience is, in its very first interpretation, already interpreted according to the conceptuality of Greek philosophy). We must, in other words, turn to Aristotle's own texts. In a seminar from 1922–23, Heidegger thus makes the following observation: "Perhaps richer relations become visible in the anthropology of Paul and Augustine, but they emerge from faith. Considered philosophically, this anthropology remains behind Aristotle. Aristotle is never again equaled" (WUPIA, 38–39).

When, therefore, Heidegger in the first class of his seminar on *De Anima* in SS1921 asks, "What connection is there such that psychology

should arise in philosophy? How is psychology built into the philosophy of Aristotle?", we should recognize that he is bringing to the Aristotelian text the problem of the relation between philosophy and life that he has struggled with in previous semesters. If the problem that Heidegger posed earlier was that of how to access life without the kind of objectification that drains it of life, it is precisely this problem that makes him turn to *De Anima*, as he explicitly acknowledges in that first class: "The question regarding the methodological access to the object soul is for us {a central point} of the treatise." This, Heidegger notes, is *the problem of definition*, adding that Heinrich Rickert misunderstood the problem as one internal to formal logic, whereas it is in fact, as Aristotle well recognizes, a problem of *ontology*, of how to *access being*.[4] This critical reference to Heinrich Rickert, whose work on the meaning of definition is described as "open to criticism in every respect," is significant since Rickert was one of Heidegger's most important teachers.[5] Aristotle is the teacher now.

From this starting point with *De Anima*, Heidegger's reading follows a natural trajectory to an ontology of human life in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and then the ontology of movement as such in the *Physics*. Only much later will he turn to the texts in the *Metaphysics* dealing with the different senses of being. What is perhaps surprising, however, is that even when he returns to teaching after the war during the 1950s, it is the *Physics*, not the *Metaphysics*, that remains his focus and that is explicitly treated as the main text of Aristotelian, indeed Western ontology. As we will see, there is some change, however difficult to interpret, in Heidegger's understanding of the key notions of *kinêsis* and therefore of *dunamis* and *energeia*, but the central importance of these notions for him has not changed at all.

If we now know the topics and texts that motivate Heidegger's turn to Aristotle, to what kind of an interpretation does Heidegger subject them? What is his *method* of reading? In the published English translation of Heidegger's 1921–22 course, we find the title: "Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle." What does that mean? Are Aristotle's texts "phenomena" that Heidegger seeks to let show themselves from themselves? Clearly not; Heidegger does not see interpretation as a question of letting the texts "speak for themselves," as if such a thing were possible. The "phenomena" here are *what* Aristotle's texts are *about*. Heidegger can read Aristotle "phenomenologically" only because he considers Aristotle

[4] The reference is to Rickert 1888.

[5] Heidegger took no less than thirteen courses with Rickert between 1912 and 1915. Rickert also supervised his *Habilitation* on Duns Scotus.

himself to be a phenomenologist and with some justification: The method for arriving at an understanding of the soul as a principle of life in *De Anima* is Aristotle's usual one of starting with what in a way is less clear but *most manifest* (ἐκ τῶν ἀσαφῶν μὲν φανερωτέρων δὲ, 413a11); the starting point of the *Physics* is how natural things *show themselves* (φαίνεται, 192b12); the goal of the discussion of *kinêsis* in *Physics* III is not allowing it to remain hidden (δεῖ μὴ λανθάνειν, 200b13–14). Should we then understand Heidegger as carrying out phenomenological interpretations *with* Aristotle? But "Aristotle" is not a fellow inquirer doing phenomenology with Heidegger, but rather a *text* that itself needs to be an object of discussion and interpretation.

This is why Heidegger in fact does not characterize what he is doing as phenomenological interpretations *of* (von) Aristotle nor as phenomenological interpretations *with* (mit) Aristotle, but instead tries to convey something in between with a phrase odd even in German and even odder if directly translated into English: "phenomenological interpretations *to* (zu) Aristotle." Translations that wish to capture the preposition "zu," rather than mistranslating it as "of," must turn it into a phrase to produce comprehensible English: "phenomenological interpretations *with respect to* Aristotle." The meaning of this phrase remains hard to understand, however, until we see it as seeking to avoid the two alternatives previously described: *not* simply an interpretation of Aristotle's texts *nor* simply an interpretation of the phenomena dealt with in Aristotle's texts, but an interpretation of the phenomena themselves (life, being in motion) through a creative, future-oriented "repetition" (in the sense explained earlier: not mere "replication") of the interpretation of these phenomena in Aristotle's texts. Phenomenological interpretation of life is what Heidegger has been engaged in since at least the course of the war emergency semester of 1919: He is not abandoning this interpretation in turning to Aristotle, but is rather turning it *to* Aristotle: phenomenological interpretations *now with respect to Aristotle*. This is not to suggest that the phenomenological interpretations remain unchanged in being turned to Aristotle; they must be transformed in responding to the phenomenological interpretations *in* Aristotle. One can presume that Heidegger chose the preposition "zu" because of the ambiguity it preserves between senses of "to," "in," and "with," all of which are intended. Even the sense "of" is not entirely excluded to the extent that Heidegger is indeed providing interpretations *of* Aristotle. Yet what he primarily seeks to interpret and understand is not Aristotle, but rather what Aristotle himself sought to understand.

We thus return to where we began: the meaning of the title *Heidegger and Aristotle*. A more accurate title, if also horrible and unacceptable to any publisher, might be: *Heidegger to Aristotle* or, more clearly if less richly ambiguous, *Heidegger with respect to Aristotle*. Such a title would capture the dialogical relation between the two names suggested earlier, while acknowledging that Aristotle also must be here an *object* of interpretation. Given the complexity of the relation between the two, *Heidegger and Aristotle*, both the *Elements* and the thing can be approached and appreciated on different levels. Because Heidegger is carefully reading Aristotle's texts in a way that must be not only innovative but also faithful (he cannot make the texts say whatever he wants them to say), the student of Aristotle can find much of interest in this reading. Because Heidegger, "with respect to Aristotle," is developing his own interpretation of the phenomena here, his reading will be of interest to students of Heidegger. But the most fruitful approach in my view is to preserve the ambiguous "zu" so that the point is not simply to understand Heidegger or Aristotle, but to allow Heidegger *and* Aristotle to provoke and further our own grappling with the phenomena. Phenomenological interpretations with respect to Heidegger with respect to Aristotle, as it were. The final section will give an indication of some of the issues and questions that lie in this direction and thus of the potential benefits of reading Heidegger and Aristotle in this way. First, however, a detailed and comprehensive survey of Heidegger's reading of Aristotle is needed.

2 Complete Survey of Heidegger's Readings of Aristotle

A comprehensive survey of Heidegger's reading of Aristotle has been lacking in the literature, even as concerns the works published to date. It is such a survey that I attempt to provide here, with the inclusion of seminars not yet published but most of which I have reconstructed and discussed on the basis of student transcripts in Gonzalez 2022a and 2024a. This comprehensive survey is necessary to see the full scope of Heidegger's reading and the depth of his engagement with Aristotle's texts. It also documents changes in the focus of his reading as well as what remained constant, for example, the Aristotelian texts he returned to again and again over decades and the theses he continued to defend. The survey will provide basic information about each seminar, course, lecture, or essay and indicate its content and significance. At the end, some general conclusions will be drawn.

Before commencing this survey, however, a question touched on in the previous section needs to be addressed here in more detail. As the survey will show, after Heidegger turns to the detailed reading of Aristotle in 1921, his engagement with the Greek philosopher will be intense and will continue for decades. But *why* does he suddenly turn to Aristotle in 1921? And, even more surprisingly, why by 1922 is he already committed to dedicating his first major work to Aristotle? Indeed, by September 20, 1922, he is writing to Karl Löwith that the introduction to Aristotle he presented in the WS1921–22 course and was continuing to work on "is nothing more or less than my existence" (Heidegger and Löwith 2017, 65).

In later years Heidegger would claim that his serious engagement with Aristotle went back to his student years in the *Gymnasium*. In "Mein Weg in die Phänomenologie" of 1963, he tells the story that the dissertation by Franz Brentano, "Von der mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seienden nach Aristoteles [On the manifold meaning of being according to Aristotle]" (1862) was from 1907 "staff and rod of my first clumsy attempts to enter philosophy," and instigated him to checkout Aristotle's complete works from the library a year later (GA14, 93). In Richardson 1963, Heidegger calls Brentano's book "the first philosophical text through which I worked my way, again and again from 1907 on" (x). In the 1972 preface to the edition of his "Early Writings," Heidegger even claims that Brentano's book, given to him by the archbishop of Freiburg i. Breisgau and a family friend, Dr. Conrad Gröber, was *the* unremitting motivation (*der* unablässige Anlaß) for the writing of *Being and Time* two decades later, despite the intervening reversals, false paths, and perplexities (GA1, 56). In *From a Conversation on Language*, Heidegger even pulls out the gifted book itself and reads the following entry: "My first guideline through Greek philosophy during the time at the *Gymnasium*" (GA12, 88 [92]).

Yet despite this story repeated so often by Heidegger in later years, there is no evidence in Heidegger's work or teaching prior to 1921 of any serious engagement with Aristotle, much less with the senses of being in Aristotle.[6] Aristotle does not figure in either the courses he took as a student between 1909 and 1915 or in the courses he taught between 1916 and 1920, with

[6] On this point, see also Chirinos 2004, 323, who further notes that, even when Heidegger in his courses of the 1920s discusses the senses of being in Aristotle, he never cites the work by Brentano (323n44). Chirinos even argues, for reasons that cannot be reviewed here, that Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle could *not* have taken its point of departure from a thorough study of Brentano's work (327). See also Torres and Yáñez 2024, 454; their article interestingly shows that it was *other* works by Brentano that proved significant for the thought of the early Heidegger. They also consider why Heidegger may have told his later story.

the apparent minor exception of a co-taught (with Engelbert Krebs) "Practicum" on Aristotle's logical writings in SS1916.[7] Furthermore, as the following survey will show, when Heidegger does turn to serious engagement with Aristotle's texts, the focus of his interest is not at all on the different meanings of being in Aristotle, but rather on the ontology of life and the being of movement. Indeed, he will not provide a reading of *Metaphysics* VI [E] 2, in which Aristotle introduces the different senses of being, until the course of SS1926. This text with its doctrine is clearly not what turned him to Aristotle five years earlier. Furthermore, while *Being and Time* will be seen to owe much to the reading of Aristotle, the doctrine of the different meanings of being is not central to these debts. Indeed, the introduction of the question of being at the start of the work is prefaced, not with a quotation from Aristotle on being as spoken of in many ways, but rather with a quotation from Plato's *Sophist* in which perplexity is expressed concerning *the* meaning of being. While we cannot deny that Heidegger received the book by Brentano in 1907 and that it played some role in motivating an interest in philosophy, any greater significance than that seems to be a backward projection on the part of the older Heidegger. It is significant in this regard that the text "Mein bisheriger Weg [My Earlier Way]" written in 1937/38 does not mention Brentano's book and dates the engagement with Aristotle to *after* the early writings (GA66, 411–412), though this is perhaps explained by Heidegger's focus in this account on his *writings* ("angezeigt durch die Schriften," 411). More significant is the fact that the *Lebenslauf* Heidegger wrote in 1915, and in which he speaks of his philosophical influences and interests, contains no mention of Brentanos's book or even of Aristotle. Indeed, if in the 1963 text he suggests that it was reading Aristotle with or through Husserl that was decisive for his development, in 1915 he writes: "Next to the small Summa of Thomas Aquinas and individual works of Bonaventura, it is the logical investigations of Edmund Husserl that were decisive for my development" (GA16, 37–38). No mention of Aristotle! In a Vita written in June 1922, and in which therefore the first courses and seminars on Aristotle are mentioned, there is again no indication of a special interest in Aristotle before 1921–22, Aristotle being mentioned only in the context of Heidegger's early study of the philosophical background of Catholic

[7] See Denker et al., 2004, 13–17. Given that apparently no material for the SS1916 seminar on Aristotle's logical writings has survived, it is impossible to judge its contents or Heidegger's contribution. See Yfantis who notes that before SS1921 Aristotle is not cited precisely in the context of those questions/problems for which he will prove of central importance later (99–103).

theology (GA16, 41–45). In conclusion, despite Heidegger's later narrative, the turn to Aristotle in 1921 was indeed abrupt and unanticipated by Heidegger's earlier interests.

Heidegger's relation to Aristotle before this turn even appears to have been mostly hostile: Aristotle was the father of that Scholasticism that had to be opposed if there was to be any hope of arriving at a philosophical interpretation of human existence. Even at the same time he is teaching *De Anima* in SS1921, he is teaching a course on Augustine, where he represents the latter as the counterforce to Aristotle within medieval philosophy. "Medieval theology is based on Augustine. The medieval reception of Aristotle was able to assert itself – if at all – only in a sharp confrontation with Augustinian directions of thought…. Augustinianism has a twofold meaning: *philosophically*, it means a Christian Platonism turned against Aristotle; *theologically*, a certain conception of the doctrine of sins and grace (freedom of the will and predestination)" (GA60, 159; trans. 115). Heidegger furthermore notes that Luther, with his hatred of Aristotle, was under the strong influence of Augustine. Heidegger indeed in this course still appears to subscribe to the view he articulated in notes for an undelivered lecture (1918–19) on the philosophical foundations of medieval mysticism:

> Supplementary note: Already in the strongly natural-scientific, naturalistic theoretical metaphysics of being of Aristotle and its radical elimination and misrecognition of the problem of value in Plato, which is renewed in medieval Scholasticism, the predominance of the theoretical is already potentially present, so that Scholasticism, within the totality of the medieval Christian world of experience, severely endangered precisely the immediacy of religious life, and forgot religion in favor of theology and dogma (GA60, 313–314; trans. 238).

The perspective here is decidedly Anti-Aristotelian. It seems doubtful, however, that the dramatic turn to Aristotle can be fully explained by the principle of "know-your-enemy."[8]

Surprisingly, what Heidegger turns to first in turning to Aristotle are not the ethical texts, with their notion of *phronêsis* that will soon become so central to his reading, but precisely the "theoretical texts," the *Metaphysics* and the *Physics*, that he saw as leading to the endangerment of the immediacy of religious life. He indeed turns to *De Anima* first and that text is the only immediate link to his earlier concern with the facticity of life in the Christian world, but it too is a "theoretical" work, something Heidegger emphasizes in interpreting *De Anima* along with the *Metaphysics* as an

[8] As Kisiel puts it, if the "destructive motive provided the initial impetus towards Aristotle, clearly something happened along the way" (1993, 228).

ontology. Indeed, the first sentence in the notes of Helene Weiss for the seminar is the following: "*Metaphysics* and *Physics* to be drawn upon in order to gain an understanding of Aristotelian philosophy."

It is possible that, as Kisiel (227) and Yfantis (103n185) suggest, Heidegger's turn to Aristotle had initially no strong philosophical motivation. They both refer to a letter to Karl Löwith of September 13, 1920, in which Heidegger represents his decision to teach Aristotle's *Metaphysics* the next summer as being the result of his students' lack of theological background.[9] In this case, the *De Anima* seminar of SS1921 acquires great significance: not seriously engaged with Aristotle's thought prior to the seminar and offering the seminar only out of a certain pedagogical necessity, Heidegger shortly thereafter will dedicate himself to an intensive study of Aristotle projected as his first major publication. The suddenness and extent of the turn is astonishing.

The significance of the *De Anima* seminar as a turning point is not hard to see: It is there that Heidegger finds in Aristotle an interpretation of life as a certain kind of being-moved. In this interpretation he finds the ontological basis of the factical life that he found described in early Christianity, but there without the articulation of this basis. This is made clear in the proposal for his Aristotle book that Heidegger writes in 1922 (the so-called "Natorp Bericht"). In answering there the question of "Why Aristotle?", he first writes: "By beginning with the idea of the human being, the ideals of life, and representation of the being of human life, philosophy today moves within ramifications of basic experiences which have been temporally developed in Greek ethics and *above all* [vor allem] in the Christian idea of the human being and of human Dasein" (GA62, 368; trans. in Kisiel/Sheehan, 164; my emphasis). Given the "above all," one must wonder why Heidegger does not focus on the Christian idea of man, as he did before SS1921, rather than the Greek or Aristotelian. One answer is that Heidegger now sees that there is no real alternative here, given that the Christian idea, *even* in its Augustinian version,[10] is fully indebted to the Greek or Aristotelian idea, to the point that Heidegger can go on to speak

[9] Heidegger's *Seminarbuch* shows no less than 74 (!) students registered for the seminar, which supports its having been rather "remedial" in original intention, despite the presence in it of students like Hans Jonas and Karl Löwith.

[10] While in the *Natorp Bericht* Heidegger does refer to Augustine as a counter-current to Late Scholastic Theology and one to which Luther is indebted, he also writes: "And at the same time, Augustine is also crucially influential and, through him, Neoplatonism. And through Neoplatonism, Aristotle is once again influential, and this to a greater extent than is usually assumed" (GA62, 370; trans, in Kisiel and Sheehan, 166). Thus, what was earlier the Augustinian countercurrent to Aristotelianizing Late Scholasticism is now just another current of Aristotelianism.

of "the *Greek-Christian interpretation of life* [die *griechisch-christliche Lebensauslegung*]" (369, 36).[11] Furthermore, the focus must be on Aristotle if we are to uncover the logical and metaphysical structures that underly this interpretation (371). Specifically, the work out of which Aristotle's ontology and logic grow and which therefore must be, and will be, the focus of Heidegger's interpretation is the *Physics*. Why that work? "The central phenomenon, the explication of which is the theme of the *Physics*, is being in the how of its being-moved [im Wie seines Bewegtseins]" (371). It is in the SS1921 *De Anima* seminar that Heidegger comes to see chapters 7–9 of *Metaphysics* VII on becoming (*genesis*) as central to Aristotle's ontology, rather than as a digression, and comes to see life as a peculiar sort of becoming: and both insights occur, as I have shown in Gonzalez 2024a (see 24–25, 28, 42–43), *in the course of the seminar*.

This seminar is thus the missing link. Without it, we would not be able to explain the sudden turn from the total lack of serious engagement with Aristotle prior to SS1921 to the offering of a year-long course on Aristotle in WS1921–22/SS1922 that quickly becomes a major book project.[12] And even if *De Anima* recedes into the background in the "Natorp Bericht," its foundational role in the project becomes clear when Heidegger observes that the *Ethics* will be placed in its ontological horizon as the explication of the movement of human life and that "this will be worked out in such a way that *De anima* is first interpreted with regard to its ontological-logical constitution, and indeed on the broad basis of the explication of the ontological region of *life* as a determinate movedness (interpretation of *De motu animalium*)" (GA62, 397; my trans.). This explication of life as a "determinate movedness" is precisely what Heidegger finds in *De Anima* in SS1921 and this explication both precedes, at least in the order of discovery, and motivates the turn to both the account of the movedness of human life in the *Ethics* and the account of movedness as such in the *Physics*.

SS1921 Seminar on *De Anima* (along with *Metaphysics* Z): Student Transcripts Recently Published

Heidegger reads Aristotle's *De Anima*, and with some justification, as an *ontology* of life, that is, as an account of what kind of being characterizes living things. He, therefore, reads *De Anima* with the account of being,

[11] In the SS1922 course, Heidegger even speaks of the broad 'uncriticalness' (Kritiklosigkeit) of this attempt to think religious life in terms of Neoplatonic categories when the latter are "purely Aristotelian [rein aristotelisch]" (GA62, 101).

[12] Thus Figal, who oddly ignores the *De Anima* seminar, describes the turn as "surprising [überraschend]" (2007, 69).

specifically *ousia*, to be found in the *Metaphysics*. The sudden realization during the seminar, already noted, that the central chapters (7–9) of *Metaphysics* VII devoted to *becoming* (*genesis*) are central to the account of *ousia* there inaugurates that focus on the being of *kinêsis* (motion) and the *kinêsis* of being that will subsequently make Heidegger focus on the *Physics* and that will guide the whole of his reading of Aristotle. As I have argued elsewhere (Gonzalez 2018b), in this coupling of the question of the being of a living being with the question of being in general and in the addressing of both from the perspective of the phenomenon of motion, this seminar on *De Anima* anticipates the general structure and content of the investigation that will be published as *Being and Time*. Yet the focus here, unlike that of *Being and Time*, is the ontology of *life*. It is significant in this regard that Heidegger had the idea of following up the seminar on *De Anima* with a seminar in the Fall on Aristotle's biological works.[13] Unfortunately, he did not follow through on this idea.

WS1921/22 Lecture Course *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles: Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung (Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle: Introduction to Phenomenological Research)*: Published as *Gesamtausgabe* 61

This course does not offer the interpretation of Aristotle it promises in its title. It is instead a version of the general philosophical "introduction" to what would become the projected book on Aristotle. We know that Heidegger repeatedly revised this introduction and what is published in the *Gesamtausgabe* volume does not indicate these later revisions.[14] One significant later revision that can be identified as such in Heidegger's surviving manuscript (75.7044, p. 8) concerns the thesis he will first defend in the autumn of 1922: that for Aristotle "being=being-produced." The published passage is as follows, with the later insertion in brackets:

> If a thing is to be grasped as such in a fundamental way, it must be grasped in that with which it is concerned as an object to be grasped, [that is, in the manner in which it is there in accordance with the dealings peculiar to it, therefore, in the determinate Greek logic of objects, in

[13] In a letter to Karl Löwith dated October 3, 1921, Heidegger tells him that if he teaches a small seminar that term, it will be on Aristotle, if Löwith could get to work on Aristotle's biological investigations (Heidegger and Löwith 2017, 57).

[14] As Kisiel 1993 notes, 534n3, Heidegger mentions working on the introduction several times in letters to Löwith: September 20, 1922; November 22, 1922; February 20, 1923; April 21, 1923; July 30, 1923; September 27, 1923; March 19, 1924.

> accordance with its having come into being through determinately seen becoming, its being made, produced, and taken care of,] i.e., in its genus or ultimately in its highest genus and region.[15]

We will see the inserted claim about the "Greek logic of objects" come to dominate Heidegger's reading of Aristotle starting with the Fall of 1922. In the course as delivered in 1921/22, this claim was not yet made, as is also shown by the preserved notes of Helene Weiss (WPIA) that contain no trace of it.

SS1922 Lecture Course *Phänomenologische Interpretationen Ausgewählter Abhandlungen des Aristoteles zur Ontologie und Logik (Phenomenological Interpretations of Selected Treatises of Aristotle on Ontology and Logic)*: Published as *Gesamtausgabe* 62

Providing the reading of Aristotle promised in the preceding course, and therefore to be seen not only as its continuation[16] but also as its point,[17] this course translates and interprets the first two chapters of *Metaphysics* I followed by the early chapters of *Physics* I. The topic of the former text is wisdom (*sophia*) as the highest possibility of human existence, the one indeed that approximates us to the divine. But if Heidegger in the course turns from the *Metaphysics* to the *Physics* rather than vice versa, this is because he surprisingly sees the former as *grounded in* the latter. The reason is clear in the title of a section of the course that provides the

[15] I discuss the manuscript evidence for the later insertion in the context of discussing Heidegger's later thesis that the Greeks understood being from the perspective of production in Gonzalez Forthcoming2.

[16] In a Vita he wrote on June 30, 1922, Heidegger lists the SS1923 course as the "continuation" (Fortsetzung) of the WS1921–22 course (GA16, 44). In a letter to Jaspers of June 25, 1921, he describes the course he will give that Winter as being on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (Heidegger and Jaspers 1990, 21), which he will not finally turn to until the next summer.

[17] In the 1921–22 course, Heidegger asserts: "Accordingly, this introduction, if taken and used on its own (which would be counter to its proclaimed sense), is not one self-subsistent half of a concrete interpretation of Aristotle, which would stand alongside another half, but is, without the latter, in itself nothing, at most a misunderstanding of philosophy" (GA61, 112; trans. Rojcewicz, p. 84). Yfantis is therefore not right to claim that Heidegger approaches the Aristotelian texts with questions that are not taken out of these texts themselves (103–4), as if the philosophical problematic were completely independent of the interpretation of Aristotle. On the contrary, Heidegger tells us at the start of the course: "Our interpretations of Aristotle's lectures and treatises spring, rather, from a concrete philosophical problematic, so much so that this investigation into the Aristotelian philosophy does not in any way present a mere accidental surplus, a 'supplement' or an elucidation "from the historiological side," but, instead, *itself constitutes a basic part of this problematic*" (GA61, 11; trans. Rojcewicz, p. 11). On this point, see also Rojcewicz's introduction to his translation, pp. xiii–xiv.

transition: "The manners of illuminating, as well as the highest way of genuine understanding, as ways in which life gets around and thereby seen in the fundamental character of movement (κίνησις) …" (GA62). Even wisdom is possible only as a movement of human life; therefore, its possibility, and accordingly that of metaphysics itself, cannot be understood without an understanding of the phenomenon of movement as analyzed in the *Physics*. In this course, Heidegger does not yet turn to the explicit definition of movement in *Physics* III. Instead, he focuses on a necessary preliminary: Aristotle's critique of those philosophers who would exclude movement from being, that is, the Eleatics. Such an exclusion would not only destroy the possibility of physics, as Aristotle argues, but also, in Heidegger's view, the possibility of metaphysics or ontology itself.

Autumn of 1922: The So-called *Natorp Bericht* with the Proposal for a Book on Aristotle

Clarification is necessary here on where this text stands in relation to other texts Heidegger was working on in the period, as this clarity is lacking in the secondary literature. Specifically, we must distinguish between the following:

1) the text of the WS 1921/22 course, "Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle"
2) a text also entitled "Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle" and presumably drawing on the course but including the discussion of Aristotelian texts undertaken only in the SS1922 course. Heidegger intended to publish this text in Husserl's *Jahrbuch* in the autumn of 1922, as he tells Jaspers as early as June 27, 1922 (Heidegger and Jaspers 1990, 29), Georg Misch on June 30, 1922,[18] and Gadamer

[18] Heidegger writes to Misch on June 30, 1922:

> A first part of the investigations of this 'Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle' on *Metaphysics* I.1–2 and *Physics* I, II, III.1–3 is complete, and will be dictated into the machine when vacation begins. Printing begins in September for the *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*. A second part on *Metaphysics* VII-IX, along with II and X, as well as *Nicomachean Ethics* VI, is undergoing its final elaboration in the special four-hour lecture course now taking place" (translated in Kisiel and Sheehan, 112).

What exactly was complete and ready to be dictated and printed? And as we now know, the course of SS1922 contains no treatment of *Metaphysics* VII-IX or *Nicomachean Ethics* VI, much less *Metaphysics* II and X which *nowhere* receive detailed treatment from Heidegger.

on September 29, 1922;[19] this project is confirmed by Husserl himself, who in December is claiming that Heidegger's text will appear soon in volume VII of the *Jahrbuch* (HBW III, 217). This publication was never realized.

3) The *Natorp Bericht* which Heidegger worked on for three weeks only after September 26, when he heard of Natorp's request for a writing sample made to Husserl in a letter of September 22.[20] According to Heidegger himself, he excerpted himself in writing this report,[21] presumably using parts of the text he was preparing for publication.[22]
4) The book on Aristotle Heidegger projected in the *Natorp Bericht*: presumably a longer version of the text Heidegger had originally intended to publish in the autumn of 1922.[23] We must assume that what he told Gadamer in September of 1922 would be in print in the "next weeks" cannot be the same text that he would still be working on until 1925.[24]

[19] Heidegger tells Gadamer that his "Phenomenological Interpretations with respect to Aristotle" will be published "in the next weeks" (!). He furthermore describes this as consisting of a first part of approximately 15 *Bogen* dealing with *Nicomachean Ethics* Z, *Metaphysics* A 1–2, and *Physics* A-Γ and a second part of the same length dealing with *Metaphysics* ZHΘ, *De motu [animalium]*, and *De anima*, with a third part to appear later (Gadamer and Heidegger 2024, 3–4). If the reference is to a *Druckbogen* (print sheet), each of which normally comprises 16 pages, then the length of each part is 240 pages for a total of 480 pages. The mystery is how Heidegger could speak of the imminent publication of this work, given that the book he projects in the *Natorp Bericht* is one that he would be working on until 1925 and never finish. And what of the *introduction*? And what could Heidegger possibly have intended with the *third part* of which there is no mention in the *Natorp Bericht*?

[20] According to the editor of GA62, Heidegger did not hear from Husserl until September 26; Natorp's letter to Husserl inquiring about Heidegger and asking for some sample of his work is dated September 22; see HBW V, 155–159.

[21] As he tells Jaspers in a letter of November 19, 1922 (Heidegger and Jaspers 1990, 33–34).

[22] Of this report, there were at least three copies made: one sent to Paul Natorp at the University of Marburg and of which H.-G. Gadamer read the first part (i.e., the introduction without the summary of the study of Aristotle), now lost; a copy sent to Georg Misch at the University of Göttingen for a possible position there and rediscovered in 1989; Heidegger's own copy, found in his Nachlass after the rediscovery of the Misch copy, annotated but missing a few pages. When Heidegger in a letter to Löwith of November 22, 1922 tells him that his "Aristotle Introduction" was read by Ebbinghaus and typed by his wife, he is presumably referring to his own typescript (as suggested by the editor of GA62, 427, 445), since later in the same letter he mentions Natorp as already having an introduction *and translation* (presumably taken from the SS1922 course) and being "seized" by them.

[23] In a letter to Jaspers on June 18, 1924, Heidegger, reporting an invitation he received to spend three years in Japan, writes that if he decided to go, he could do so only after "my Aristotle is out" (Heidegger and Jaspers 1990, 48). As late as August 5, 1925, the Marburg Philosophical Faculty is reporting to the Berlin Ministry of Science, Art and National Education that Heidegger has two books to come out: the Aristotle book and "a recently written systematic work on 'Being and Time'" (Kisiel 1993, 479).

[24] In his text, "Heideggers 'theologische' Jugendschrift", Gadamer tells us that Heidegger's work on Aristotle was to fill *two entire volumes* of Husserl's *Jahrbuch* (see Heidegger 2002, 79), citing as confirmation a letter from Heidegger in the autumn of 1922. If this is the

Of these different texts, we possess today only (1) and (3), the latter itself discovered and published only in 1989. It is in the report, and not in the 1921–22 course as originally delivered, that we find for the first time Heidegger's thesis that "being=being-produced" for Aristotle, a thesis that will dominate his reading at least during the 1920s, as we will see. The key passage is the following:

> That at which the original experience of being aims is not the ontological field of *things* as a kind of object substantively grasped *theoretically*, but rather the world that encounters us as we go around producing, using and taking care of. That which has become finished in this going around of production (ποίησις), that which has come into a being-present-at-hand available for a tendency of use, is that which *is*. Being signifies *being-produced*, and as produced, having significance relative to a certain tendency of dealings, being-available (GA62, 373; my trans.).

It is important to understand this thesis as a response to the important question that immediately precedes it in the text, a question that suggests it as only one of two possible answers:

> Is the meaning of being that in the end characterizes the being of human life genuinely derived from a pure fundamental experience of precisely this object and its being? Or is human life grasped within a more encompassing field of being and accordingly subjected to a meaning of being posited as paradigmatic for it? (GA62, 373)

Heidegger immediately responds, without explanation or justification: "The object field that produces the original meaning of being is that of the things that are *produced (hergestellt)*, objects taken up in use in one's surroundings." Thus, what Heidegger's thesis is claiming is that Aristotle did *not* derive the meaning of being in terms of which life is interpreted from a fundamental experience of life itself, but rather from the experience of the objects (human) life produces and uses in its dealings. But why is the first alternative in the previous question simply passed over without comment?

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letter of September 29 referred to above, it is hard to see how the text Heidegger there describes as 15+15 "Bogen" (= 480 pages) in length could fill two volumes of the *Jahrbuch*. The text that Heidegger in the end would publish in volume 8, that is, *Sein und Zeit*, at 438 pages filled only *half* of that *one* volume (the other half being taken up by Oskar Becker's *Mathematische Existenz*). Gadamer's memory here is in any case unreliable, as he also suggests (78) that reading the Natorp report is what motivated him to go to Freiburg, a story repeated by his biographer, Jean Grondin (2003, 94–95). But this is impossible: When Gadamer writes to Heidegger on September 27, 1922 to inform him of the illness that will cause him to postpone his plan to go to Freiburg, a plan that therefore must have existed for some time previously, he could not have already been shown by Natorp a text that Heidegger had at most only started writing then.

Does not Heidegger's own seminar on Aristotle's ontology of life in *De Anima*, a seminar in which he asserted that the biological is the fundamental beginning of knowledge for Aristotle, give us reason to consider this first alternative as at least a possibility? Yet with the introduction of the thesis that being=being-produced for Aristotle (and for the Greeks), the possibility that Aristotle derived the meaning of being from a fundamental experience of life itself is left behind, as is *De Anima*, which is not central to the book on Aristotle Heidegger here projects and is interpreted extensively for the last time in the 1922–23 seminar, though, as we will see, it appears occasionally later and sometimes in contexts of great importance. According to the outline, the first part of the book was to be divided into three sections: (i) *Nicomachean Ethics* VI, (ii) *Metaphysics* A 1 and 2, and (iii) *Physics* A-E. A second part was to focus on the interpretation of *Metaphysics* Z H Θ.[25]

WS1922–23 Seminar *Übungen über Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles (Nikomachische Ethik VI; de anima; Metaphysik VII) (Exercises on Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle [Nicomachean Ethics VI; de anima; Metaphysics VII])*: Unpublished. Texts Discussed Are *De Anima* III 9, *Metaphysics* VII 1–3, and *Nicomachean Ethics* VI 2

This seminar can be seen as a continuation of that of SS1921 to the extent that it continues the reading of *De Anima*, turning, after the focus on Book 2 in the earlier seminar, to Book 3, especially the later chapters on the "locomotive" power of the soul. But what Heidegger finds in this power, analyzed in terms of "desire" (*orexis*) and "intuition" (*nous*), is the movement that characterizes all life in its very being. This seminar nevertheless already moves away from *De Anima* in connecting its account of the power of locomotion with the account of *orexis* and *nous* in Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, thus restricting the scope of Heidegger's ontology from all life as such to human life. It is also here for the first time in the seminars that Heidegger introduces the central thesis noted earlier, while acknowledging that "The proposition 'being=being-produced' is not to be found in Aristotle. It is not explicit for him. The interpretation involves *necessarily* a *leap*, goes beyond that which is interpreted" (WUPIA, February 15, 1923).

[25] As noted earlier, Heidegger does suggest a return to *De Anima* at the end of the second part (GA62, 397).

SS1923 Continuation of the Preceding Seminar: Unpublished

It is the account of the "dianoetic" virtues in *Nicomachean Ethics* VI that becomes the exclusive focus of the summer continuation of the earlier seminar. Heidegger will return to this account in the WS1924–25 course on Plato's *Sophist*. There is, of course, overlap between both interpretations, but the context and perspective are significantly different. In the WS1924–25 course, the focus is on the relation between *phronêsis* and *sophia* and the question of which has priority; and this is due to the context of an introduction to Plato. In the SS1923 seminar, the "dianoetic" virtues are interpreted in the context of an ontology of life, with an eye to how they illuminate the movement distinctive of (human) life. It is in this seminar that Heidegger will first draw a connection between Aristotle's account of *phronêsis* and the notion of "conscience" (*Gewissen*) that will play such an important role in *Being and Time* (WC, 13). But note that in both cases the context is strictly *ontological* and the phenomenon at issue is the *disclosedness* of our being. We should also note that in the account of *Gewissen* in *Being and Time*, the debt to Aristotle goes completely unacknowledged.

SS1923 Seminar on *Nicomachean Ethics* I: Unpublished

Heidegger here for the first time turns to Book 1 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, interpreting the first six chapters in some detail and sequentially. Ironically, the course (or the notes) breaks off right before Heidegger gets to Aristotle's definition of the highest good at 1098a16–17 as "activity of the soul in accordance virtue" (though he will get to the definition in the SS1924 course). The primary goal of Heidegger's reading can be said to be the interpretation of the being of human life as *praxis*. However, as a sign of the directing thesis that Aristotle interpreted being in terms of production, Heidegger makes no distinction between this *praxis* and *poiêsis*. While Aristotle opens the *Ethics* with the claim that "Every *technê* and every *methodos*, *and likewise praxis* and *prohairesis*, appear to aim at some good" (1094a1–2), a claim that clearly implies a distinction between the two sets of terms despite the common aim, Heidegger insists that they are all to be included within a broad sense of *praxis* understood as "taking care of something (*etwas besorgen*) (and in a completely indifferent sense = settling something [*erledigen*])" (WNE, 1). When he interprets the same line in the SS1924 course, the broader or more encompassing term will be said to be *technê* (GA18, 68). This is possible because a common feature of Heidegger's reading of Aristotle after the introduction of the mentioned

thesis is an elision of the distinction between *praxis* and *poiêsis* that assimilates the former to the latter in the notion of *Besorgen*: a notion that in *Being and Time* will interpret Dasein's being-in-the-world in terms of dealings with "handy" things in producing and using them.

WS1923–24 Seminar on *Physics* II: Unpublished

In this seminar we have the only reading by Heidegger of Book II of the *Physics* during the 1920s and the only reading at any period that extends beyond the first chapter of Book II. In particular, we find here Heidegger's only interpretation of chapters 4 to 6 in which Aristotle discusses the notions of *tuchê* (luck) and *to automaton* (chance). In Aristotle's account of "luck," which has the temporality of "sometimes, once in a while" and thus a *historical* temporality, Heidegger finds "an original account of temporality" never to be equaled, much less surpassed (WP, 12), even if Bergson attempted it in modern times. Interestingly, while Heidegger's own account of temporality in *Being and Time* mentions Bergson, the original and unsurpassed insight into temporality attributed to Aristotle here goes completely unmentioned there; Aristotle's contribution is instead there confined to the "vulgar" concept of time defined in the *Physics*.

WS1923–24 *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung (Introduction to Phenomenological Research)*: Published as *Gesamtausgabe* 17

This course begins with an elucidation of Aristotle's understanding of *phainomenon* (that which shows itself) through a reading of *De Anima* II 7, in which Aristotle discusses *sight*, its specific object which is color, and *light* as the activity (*energeia*) of the transparent qua transparent that makes sight possible. Significantly, Heidegger makes a point of emphasizing that *darkness*, as *potential* clarity (*dunamei on*), is not the mere negation of clarity, but something positive that also can let things be seen (10). Furthermore, for Heidegger the *phainomenon* is not simply what is strictly visible (which is color), but includes what Aristotle describes as perceived "coincidentally" (*kata sumbebêkos*), that is, *with* color: houses, trees, and people. In the end, what is *phainomenon* is beings themselves in their *presence*. Heidegger then turns to an account of the *logos apophantikos* (speech that lets something show itself) through a reading of *On Interpretation* (*peri hermêneias*), described by Heidegger as "not a text, but a manuscript belonging to his latest period, growing out of a momentary

reflection, which found no kind of pedagogical arrangement" (14). The elucidation here of the term phenomenology in terms of its Greek components of *phainomenon* and *logos* will later form section 7 of *Being and Time*. However, the discussion in *Being and Time* does not refer to either Aristotelian text. Furthermore, Heidegger focuses here on the phenomenon of falsehood or deception. "Apophantikos" is speech that "presents beings as unconcealed or presents them in such a way that in this showing something is 'placed before' [vorgemacht]" (20), and that therefore can be true or false. Heidegger explains – an insight he also attributes to Aristotle – that human beings live the greatest part of the time *in deception* (*Täuschung*, 25). This question returns him to *De Anima* and a detailed analysis of the account of perception there. An important thesis is that *aisthêsis*, as a "discriminating" (*krinein*) that yet unifies what it discriminates (in perceiving now both "green" and "sweet" together, I perceive their difference), is already in itself a kind of speaking: "we see *through* speech" (30). And speech, while having the fundamental function of *showing*, can cover things up when it is not appropriated in an original way (30). To further explore the possibility of falsehood and deception, Heidegger turns to *Metaphysics* V, 29, where Aristotle distinguishes between three meanings of *pseudos*: (1) a false thing; (2) a false *logos*; and (3) a false man. Heidegger sees these as three perspectives pointing to a fundamental phenomenon that Aristotle did not see: the *facticity of speech itself* as our way of living in the world. We live in the world in such a way that we go around things and things escape us (what Heidegger calls the *Umständigkeit* and *Entgänglichkeit* of the world, 36–37). The possibility of deception belongs not just to speech, but to the world itself (39–40). The result is a characterization of *phainomena* as "things existing in the factical world in relation to which human beings for the most part are deceived [versieht]; i.e., that which immediately shows itself so directly is now something that only looks that way, that *appears*" (38). In locating the possibility of falsehood in "synthesis" and "division," Aristotle sees to some extent that the possibility of falsehood is rooted in the fact that we always encounter things in the world *as* this or that (and most fundamentally as pleasant or painful). It is also worth noting that Heidegger, in the context of his discussion of perception, repeats a central point of his earlier reading of *De Anima*: that the soul is *dunamis*, where this word "does not mean power, capability, but rather a completely *concrete way of being*" (295; see also 26, 30). As the way of being of living things, the soul is a being-possible (*Möglichsein*: the same expression that will be used in *Being and Time* to characterize

the being of *Dasein*). Importantly, given the apparent tension with what is claimed elsewhere, Heidegger claims here that the notions of *dunamis* and *energeia* have their origin in this being-possible that characterizes life (26).

SS1924 Course *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie (Fundamental Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy)*: Published as *Gesamtausgabe* 18

In a way that reveals his own approach to Aristotle, Heidegger begins this course by exhorting his students not simply to learn and repeat or apply Aristotle's concepts, but instead to imitate what he does ("nicht nach*reden*, sondern nach*machen*!" GA18, 339): "to see and determine the thing itself with the same originality and genuineness" (15). The first part of the course turns to the *Ethics* for an interpretation of Dasein's being-in-the-world, interpreting the "good" (ἀγαθόν) not as an aim of human life, but as "'end' in the sense of constituting a completeness [Fertigkeit]" and as such "a determination of the being of human beings in the world" (65). As becomes explicit later, this interpretation of the *agathon* and *telos* is grounded in an understanding of being as being-produced (214). The first part of the course also turns to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, taken to be "nothing other than the interpretation of concrete Dasein, the hermeneutics of Dasein itself" (110), specifically in its attuned (*pathê*) being in the world with others. Heidegger can give such philosophical importance to the *Rhetoric* and its art of persuasion, against the tendency going back to Plato of opposing philosophy and persuasion, because of the following claim concerning Dasein that will become so central to *Being and Time*: "The primary orientation, the illumination of its being-in-the-world is no *knowing*, but rather a *finding-itself-disposed* (*Sichbefinden*) that in each case can be determined differently according to a being's manner of existing" (262). The second part of the course finally provides that reading of *Physics* III that Heidegger has been moving toward since the first seminar of SS1921 where he came to recognize the significance of movement or becoming for Aristotle's thought. What makes the turn to *Physics* III necessary here is Heidegger's view that "κίνησις: guiding thread for the explication of the being of the Dasein of man" (273). In this text Aristotle defines *kinêsis* as "the *entelecheia* of what is *dunamei* qua being *dunamei*" (201a10–11). How one understands this difficult definition depends, of course, on how one translates the key concepts left untranslated here. Translating/interpreting *entelecheia* as "presence" (Gegenwart, 296) and *dunamei on* quite surprisingly as "significance" (Bedeutsamkeit, 300, 370), Heidegger translates/interprets the definition as "motion is the presence of being capable

as such" (313, 315) and gives the example: "Insofar as it is there, the wood is in motion. Insofar as the wood is there in the genuine sense as capable of being a crate, is there motion" (313). The obvious objection to this interpretation is that while the wood may have *significance* through the mere *presence* of its capability of being a crate, it is clearly not thereby *in motion*. Recognizing this possible objection, Heidegger can respond only by insisting that *rest* is a type of motion (as its limit case, 314), thereby turning Aristotle's definition of motion into equally a definition of rest. The problem is that motion clearly requires not only that a capability be *present* but also that it be *active*. Yet Heidegger insists on distinguishing *entelecheia* from *energeia* (characterized as "what is not yet complete," 381–2) and translating it as "presence." This serves the two ends of Heidegger's "destruction." First, it supports his thesis that the understanding of both *kinêsis* and being is derived from *poiêsis* and only subsequently applied to nature (see 329, 381). Secondly, it allows him to appropriate Aristotle's definition of motion for what will become his own account in *Being and Time* of "significance" as characterizing Dasein's being-in-the-world.

The 1924 Lecture "Dasein und Wahrsein nach Aristoteles (Interpretation von Buch VI der Nikomachischen Ethik)" ("Being-There and Being-True According to Aristotle [Interpretation of Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*]")

A draft of this lecture has been published in *Gesamtausgabe* 80.1, but the lecture as actually delivered in December 1924 differed significantly from this draft.[26] A major difference is that in the lecture as delivered, and not in the draft, we find the thesis that the concept of being medieval theology inherited from the Greeks and applied to the understanding of god was a concept the Greeks derived from the world. In the delivered lecture, Heidegger therefore described his own task as that of "creating an ontology of Dasein in contrast to the ontology of the world" (Kisiel and Sheehan 2011, 228). There exists a clear explanation for this difference: The thesis added in delivery was that of the contemporaneous WS1924–25 course on the Middle Ages. Yet despite the thesis that the Greeks derived their concept of being from the being of the world, with the result that applying this concept to *our own being* must fundamentally misinterpret it, the lecture shows Heidegger developing the ontology of Dasein he will present in *Being and Time* through an interpretation of the "dianoetic" virtues in Book 6 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*: the interpretation he began in

[26] A translation of an auditor's typescript is to be found in Kisiel and Sheehan 2011, 212–234.

SS1923 and will continue in WS1924–25. Heidegger, therefore, concludes the lecture by speaking of the need to learn from the Greeks.

WS1924–25 seminar *Zur Ontologie des M A [Mittelalters]: Kleine Summa des Thomas (Ontology of the Middles Ages: Small Summa of Thomas)*: Unpublished

While the ostensive topic of this important seminar is medieval ontology, most of it is devoted to a reading of Aristotle in defending the thesis already noted earlier: that what medieval ontology inherits from the Greeks is an *ontology of the world* by which it then misinterprets both the divine being and our own being, neither of which is a thing in the world. Here Heidegger turns for the first time to an extended treatment of *Metaphysics* IX (Theta). It is indeed his most extensive treatment, given that it is not confined to the first three chapters of the book as the later SS1931 course will be nor to the end of the book as the WS1942/43 seminar will be. The broader scope here is important. Given the central role Heidegger grants *kinêsis*, and therefore the *Physics*, in Aristotle's ontology, he always interprets the fundamental notions of *dunamis* and *energeia* in terms of, and as derived from, *kinêsis*. Yet in *Metaphysics* IX Aristotle claims that the senses of *dunamis* and *energeia* relative to motion are *not the most useful* for his aim there and that these notions *extend beyond* motion (1045b36–1046a1). He then discusses the senses relative to motion in chapters 1 to 5 only to prepare the turn in chapter 6 to the senses *not* relative to motion. In this chapter Aristotle indeed explicitly distinguishes between *energeia* and *kinêsis*, claiming that the former possesses its end (*telos*) within itself whereas the latter does not, that *energeia* therefore by definition is "complete" whereas *kinêsis* is by definition incomplete, and that the two therefore have different relations to time: The former allowing the simultaneous use of present and perfect tenses ("I see and have seen") and the latter not ("in building the house, I have not built it, and in having built it, I am not still building it"). In SS1931 Heidegger preserves the centrality of *kinêsis* in his interpretation by confining himself to the early chapters, where Aristotle is speaking of *dunamis* and *energeia* relative to motion, and he ignores altogether chapter 6. In WS1924–25, in contrast, he confronts the difficult challenge of reconciling his interpretation with what is said in chapter 6. At the same time his reading must defend the general thesis of the course. He attempts to achieve both goals by interpreting *energeia* and the associated notion of *entelecheia* in terms of being-present and being-complete in the sense of being-finished: An interpretation that preserves their relation to motion since motion is understood as moving toward presence and completion.

WS1924–25 Course on Plato's *Sophist*: Published as *Gesamtausgabe* 19

The first part of the course is a reading of *Nicomachean Ethics* VI on the "dianoetic" virtues. As noted earlier, it continues the SS1923 reading, but with a greater emphasis on the relation between *phronêsis* and *sophia*, or rather, the *opposition* between them. This emphasis results in a rather different account of *phronêsis* from that in SS1923, one that stresses its inferiority to *sophia*. For example, while in SS1923 Heidegger in interpreting a contentious passage (1144a4–5) claims that *both phronêsis* and *sophia* produce happiness in the way that health produces health, in WS1924–25 he claims that only *sophia* does this, *phronêsis* producing happiness in the way medicine produces health, that is, as something distinct from and external to itself (GA19, 170). Furthermore, while in SS1923 he characterized *phronêsis* as positively integrated into our character, in WS1924–25 he interprets it as dependent on character in a way that rids it of the kind of independence *sophia* enjoys (GA19, 166). In short, the two accounts of *phronêsis* merit careful comparison. The association of *phronêsis* with *Gewissen* is repeated here, but in a more extreme form that moves toward an identification: "*Phronêsis* is nothing other than that conscience that makes an action transparent when set in motion" (56).

The WS1925–26 Course *Logik: die Frage nach der Wahrheit (Logic: The Question of Truth)*: Published as *Gesamtausgabe* 21

The most significant contribution of this course to the interpretation of Aristotle is Heidegger's translation of, and detailed commentary on, *Metaphysics* IX 10, though the reading is prepared by some discussion of *On Interpretation* and *Metaphysics* IV 7. What draws Heidegger to this chapter of *Metaphysics* IX is that here and only here Aristotle explicitly treats of "truth" *as a meaning of being*, even claiming it to be, to the consternation of many scholars, the *most genuine sense* of being (*to de kuriôtaton on alêthes ê pseudos*, 1051b1–2). Truth does not have its primary locus in the statement, but rather in being itself. In this chapter Aristotle first grounds the "synthesis" and "division" that give *logos* the power to be true or false (e.g., "The cloak is white" or "The cloak is not black") in a synthesis or division in beings themselves: It is because "cloak" and "white" are combined *in the thing itself* and because "cloak" and "black" are *not combined* in the thing itself that the cited sentences are true. Being in the sense of truth is being-combined and not-being in the sense of falsehood is being-divided (the second sentence is true because it is *false* that cloak

and black are combined, i.e, false because they are divided). But Aristotle here recognizes truth even, or rather primarily, in being that admits of no combination or division. In this case, "truth" is simply *being-seen* or *touched* and there is no possibility of falsehood. Even in saying falsely that "the cloak is black,", that is, presenting as combined what is divided in the thing itself, *what* a cloak is, the *being* of a cloak, must be simply given to me in intuition. What Heidegger wishes to show is that if the possibility of falsehood presupposes the possibility of combination/division in the beings themselves, this in turn presupposes that their being is *unconcealed*. It is truth as unconcealment that represents the most genuine sense of being. "Unconcealment [Entdecktheit] takes up the answer to the question of being. A character of being of beings, and indeed of the most genuine being, the simple, is determined through unconcealment" (GA21, 190). The significance of this analysis for Heidegger's own conception of truth as unconcealment that grounds the derivative truth of a statement is evident. This perspective allows Heidegger to interpret the chapter as the culmination of the ontological investigation of *Metaphysics* VII to IX, rather than as the aberration it is taken to be by those who assume "truth" to be a topic for epistemology and not ontology.

The WS1925–26 Seminar on Hegel's *Logic* I, Unpublished

This course, while indeed focused on Hegel, contains a very important discussion on Aristotle's account of time in the *Physics*. It is thus the first major treatment of this account in Heidegger's seminars. Interestingly, however, the actual exposition of Aristotle's account is entrusted to one of Heidegger's students in the seminar, none other than H. G. Gadamer, with Heidegger only asking questions and raising objections. A major point of contention is how to understand the now's function of both connecting and dividing time. Heidegger insists that it does so in remaining self-same throughout time, while Gadamer maintains that it does so instead through constant self-differentiation. Heidegger will stick to his interpretation instead of Gadamer's when he later provides his own reading.[27] It should also be noted here that Heidegger gave another seminar on Aristotle and Hegel in SS1927. Heidegger's notes for the seminar have been published in GA86, though they are unfortunately very spare and cryptic and are not supplemented by any protocol or student transcript. We can nevertheless see that again the major focus was on Hegel's *Logic* and that Aristotle received comparatively little discussion. We can also see that what was

[27] For my account of this course, see Gonzalez 2022a.

discussed was not Aristotle's account of time, as in WS1925–26, but rather Aristotle's account of the different senses of being (beyond the categories; see 43–45). There is indeed a reference back to a similar discussion in the SS1926 course to be considered here next. In both cases, Heidegger seeks to ground the unity of the different senses of being in a conception of being in terms of production (*Hergestelltheit*) and therefore as "presence-at-hand" (*Vorhandenheit*).

The SS1926 Course *Grundbegriffe der antiken Philosophie (Fundamental Concepts of Ancient Philosophy)*: Published as *Gesamtausgabe* 22

Given the broad scope of this course, which not only covers the Presocratics and Plato as well but, in the case of Aristotle, pretends to cover the whole of his philosophy, one might expect only a superficial and schematic treatment of Aristotle that adds nothing to what is learned from preceding seminars. However, the very order of Heidegger's presentation must strike us as somewhat new and even surprising: After starting with a discussion of being in the sense of the categories and transitioning to being in the sense of *dunamis* and *energeia*, with being in the senses of *sumbebêkos* and *alêtheia* being discussed in between, Heidegger's interpretation culminates in a discussion of *De Anima*: A text that last received detailed discussion from him in the seminar of 1922–3 and that was left out of the central plan of the prospectus for a book on Aristotle of 1922. Now, as earlier, Heidegger insists that *De Anima* is a work of ontology, not psychology: Its theme is life as the being of living things. Furthermore, Heidegger clearly distinguishes the ontology of life at issue in *De Anima* from the ontology of Dasein (148). Perhaps most surprisingly, the ontology of Dasein, and therefore the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which has been the central focus of Heidegger's reading of Aristotle since the prospectus of 1922, now receives only minimal treatment at the end of Heidegger's notes and briefly in the course according to the Mörchen transcript (311–313). It is as if, with *Being and Time* being written during this time, Heidegger was done with the ontology of Dasein (at least for now) and, in returning to Aristotle, changed his focus to the meaning (or meanings) of being and the being of life as such.

Because this course is pivotal in recapitulating earlier elements of Heidegger's reading while introducing new ones, it merits a more detailed presentation. With being in the sense of the categories, we clearly see being interpreted according to the structure of *logos*, given that the categories are different ways of saying something of something (quality: "The rock

is hard"; quantity: "Socrates is tall";[28] place: "The tree stands alongside the path", etc.). "The determinations of being are characterized from the perspective of λόγος. Orientation of the question of being according to λόγος" (296). The different ways of saying something of something reflect different ways of *being-present-together* (*Mitvorhandensein*): Having a quality is one way of being-present-together-with, having a quantity is another way, and so on. All the other categories refer to a primary sense of being = *ousia* because they can all be present-at-hand only in being-present-at-hand with *ousia*. *Ousia*, therefore, itself is what is present-at-hand (vorhanden), present (anwesend) in a primary and unqualified sense. The conception of being that is determinative here is thus being = *Vorhandenheit*, *Anwesenheit*. But there are other senses of being besides being in the sense of the categories: (2) being in the sense of the "coincidental" (Heidegger: *Zugeratenheit*), (3) being in the sense of truth, and (4) being in the sense of *dunamis* and *energeia*. Sense (2) is excluded from the science of being because it lacks "constancy" (Beständigkeit) and sense (3) is excluded because it lacks independence (Eigenständigkeit), that is, it is not found in the beings themselves, but in the connecting and dividing carried out in thought (304). (Heidegger argues that the characterization of "truth" as the most genuine sense of being in *Metaphysics* IX [Theta] 10 is not *inconsistent* with the exclusion of truth in thought from the science of being and instead follows from the fact that being is presence: truth as unconcealment [Entdecktheit] heightens being, representing a higher mode of being as presence: what is unconcealed is what is *most present*: 306). As for *dunamis* and *energeia* (which Heidegger characterizes as "the most difficult" phenomena in Greek and Aristotelian ontology, 315), they are for Heidegger modes of presence and therefore modes of *ousia* (307, 331). But the crucial claim is that they are derived from the phenomenon of motion, and most particularly from the phenomenon of *production* ("in *handwerklicher Bewegung*," 174). Something can be present-at-hand as simply *ready-for* …, or as simply present-at-hand, finished. The wood is ready for being a table, the motion of production is the presence of this readiness as such, and the motion ends with the table now finished and present-at-hand.

These concepts of *dunamis* and *energeia* "are now transferred from that which is produced to what moves itself" (323), that is, *what is alive*. What

[28] I have replaced here the example in Heidegger's notes of which I can make no sense: "Die Festigkeit ist zu groß" (158).

is distinctive of life is that the end, the *telos*, is not outside the movement as a product, but is in the movement itself as a mode of it (323). Yet the first claim is from the Bröcker transcript. In Heidegger's own notes we read something quite different when he explains the turn to *De Anima* and to Aristotle's ontology of life with the claim that "it is precisely the first phenomenological comprehension of life that led to the interpretation of motion and that makes possible the radicalization of ontology" (182). The conflict is at least weakened through Heidegger's view that life is itself motion and motion in the highest and fullest sense. But this view is in turn rendered problematic by the distinction between *kinêsis* and *energeia* in *Metaphysics* IX (Theta) 6 and by the account of the unmoved mover as pure *energeia* ("reine Energie," Heidegger writes), both of which texts Heidegger addresses here in passing. This does not prevent him, however, from finding "*in movement and in being-moved the highest form of being*" (according to Bröcker's notes: 324). The reason is that Heidegger interprets *energeia* and life as still a kind of movement, but a movement that is at the same time pure presence. Thus he characterizes life as "the *most genuine presence-at-hand: presence from out of itself* and *constantly completed* and yet *not resting*, lying there unmoved. Movement (Bewegtheit) and presence" (175). In proceeding to cite the examples from Theta 6, "I have seen and so I see. I have been happy and so am I right now. I have lived it and so live now," he characterizes *entelecheia* and *energeia* as "being only in a working" (nur im Wirken seiend). As he expresses it later, "ἐντελέχεια: movement and yet not only that, but what is in it" (181).

If Heidegger approves of the translation of *energeia* as *Wirklichkeit* (322), it is because this word expresses both the connection to "working" and the connection to being "real" in the sense of "present-at-hand." When it comes to the "unmoved mover," Heidegger characterizes its pure *energeia* as "*pure independent constant presence from out of itself*. A being to whose being and essence doing (Tun) as such belongs" (178). The guideline here for Heidegger's reading, despite the return to *De Anima* and the ontology of life, remains what it has been since 1922: "Being: *Being-produced*; Being: *producing*, being: *pure doing as such*" (172). It is because being is understood as being-produced that it is understood as presence: "What is *produced* should be present at hand. Being: *presence*" (162). Therefore, Heidegger continues to affirm here the thesis that Greek ontology is "an ontology of the world" (313). As for the phenomenon of life, Heidegger is reported as insisting that the life of *Dasein* "is not mere ζωή, but βίος, 'existence'" (312). The gulf between "Dasein" and "mere life" persists.

The SS1927 *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie (Basic Problems of Phenomenology)*: Published as *Gesamtausgabe* 24

What this course adds to Heidegger's reading is an important discussion of Aristotle's concept of time in the *Physics*: something that was promised for the third division of part 2 of *Being and Time* but was never published. While Heidegger's interpretation here ends up attributing to Aristotle the conception of time as an objectively present series of objectively present "nows" which he characterized as the "vulgar" concept of time in *Being and Time*, he also insists that Aristotle's "definition" of time as "the number of motion with respect to before and after" (ἀριθμὸς κινήσεως κατὰ τὸ προτερὸν καὶ ὕστερον, 219b2) is not really a "definition" strictly speaking, but only a way of accessing our ordinary experience of time (362). The way in which we ordinarily experience time is, of course, not as a "sequence of nows." There are two aspects of Heidegger's interpretation of the "definition" that in particular have it point to a deeper experience of time. First, he embraces the circularity of translating *proteron* and *husteron* as "earlier" and "later," arguing that the counting of motion is possible only in *retaining* what came earlier and *anticipating* what is to come (348–349). The definition thus gives us access to an experience of temporality as a retaining-anticipating-in-making-present. Secondly, Heidegger interprets the "now" with which we count motion as having *dimension*, being *stretched from* past *to* future, rather than being a "point" outside of which, and on the two sides of which, are found past and future (351–355). This conception of time as an anticipating-retaining-stretch is clearly at odds with the conception of time as a series of "nows." What we have here is a typical Heideggerian "destruction": destroying the doctrine about time Aristotle's "definition" has given rise to in liberating the experience of time from which this "definition" itself arose.

SS1928 *Seminar on Physics* III: Only Partially Published in *Gesamtausgabe* 83

That Heidegger returns to *Physics* III shortly after the publication of *Being and Time* shows the significance of this text for him. The return is philosophically motivated. Heidegger in *Being and Time* did not hide the fact that "the movedness of occurrence in general" ("Bewegtheit des Geschehens überhaupt," 389), that is, the occurrence of Dasein and therefore of the world and of innerworldly beings, remained an "ontological enigma" ("ontologische Rätsel"). The present seminar is a response to this enigma in that what it seeks from Aristotle's account of *kinêsis* is

an understanding of the motion that constitutes Dasein's being: what Heidegger will call "absolute motion" (see GA83, 261) and claims to be "a presupposition, not only for the understanding of motion, but for the understanding of being overall" (WP3, 21). What is pursued here is an ontology of motion, no longer simply in the sense of an account of the being of motion, but rather now in the sense of an account of the motion of being. That Heidegger in the last class (missing from the *Gesamtausgabe*) turns to *Metaphysics* IX (Theta) 6 is also highly significant: What he finds now in the notion of *energeia* as distinguished from *kinêsis* is the absolute, complete motion of Dasein itself along with its peculiar temporality (what Heidegger calls "this peculiar perfect" of *I have seen* in still seeing: WP3, 31). Throughout the seminar Heidegger has been drawing our attention not to the time *within which* motion occurs, but to the time or temporality of motion itself and, ultimately, of that "absolute motion" that is Dasein itself and that grounds our understanding of being. It is this motion of Dasein itself with its temporality that he sees as "shining through" in the passage from *Metaphysics* IX 6.

This seminar is significant in yet another way: Here Heidegger considers the possibility that his thesis that the Greeks (and therefore Aristotle) understood being as *presence* (and therefore from the perspective of production) *might not hold*, at least not unqualifiedly. Considering a passage in the *Physics* (201a31–b3) where Aristotle clearly distinguishes "being capable" (of being healthy or sick) from what is present at hand beneath these capabilities (the *hypokeimenon*), Heidegger must acknowledge that Aristotle is clearly distinguishing here between "being-capable" and "being-present" and is certainly not reducing the former to the latter. *On the contrary*, since it is only the possibility of being capable of contrary things that requires us to postulate something present at hand that remains the same beneath capabilities, the implication appears to be that the understanding of *ousia* as the presence of what is present at hand is *grounded* (*fundiert*, WP3, 7) in the distinct understanding of being as being-capable (*dunamei on*). This appears to Heidegger as "a breach in ancient ontology" (WP3, 7), that is, we should add, a breach in *his interpretation of ancient ontology*. As we saw especially clearly in the SS1926 course, Heidegger interprets being in the sense of *dunamis* and *energeia* as dependent on being in the sense of the categories, that is, *ousia*, with the latter interpreted as *presence*. Yet Heidegger emphatically closes the breach in a subsequent class by insisting, as he did in SS1924, that in Aristotle's definition of motion as the *energeia* (or *entelecheia*: the two are not distinguished here) of what is capable as capable, *energeia* can only mean "presence"; thus the being of motion, as well as the

being of what is capable (*dunaton*), is interpreted as presence. *There is no breach*. Indeed, no such breach is *allowed* since "The assumption on which our entire interpretation depends is that *energeia* and being in general signify for Aristotle *presence* [*Anwesenheit*]" (GA83, 254).

WS1928–29 Seminar *Die ontologischen Grundsätze und das Kategorienproblem (The Ontological Fundamental Principles and the Problem of the Categories)*: Unpublished

This seminar contains Heidegger's only detailed reading of *Metaphysics* IV (Gamma) on the principle of noncontradiction. The aim here is neither to critique the principle nor show its limitations. On the contrary, Heidegger seeks to ground it in Dasein's own way of being. He therefore rejects both opposed characterizations of it as a logical or an ontological principle, seeing it instead as an "existential" principle. Specifically, the principle is grounded in Dasein's *making-present*. When the principle asserts that something cannot be and not be *X* "simultaneously" (*hama*), the *hama* refers not to some copresence at a point in time, but rather to Dasein's own temporality: Dasein cannot make present something as being *X together with* (*hama*) presenting it as being not-*X*. Unfortunately, the seminar ends before Heidegger can develop this interpretation of the *hama*. This is unfortunate because on Heidegger's own reading, the *hama* must point to an understanding of time that is *not* that defined in the *Physics*. We should recall here, though Heidegger does not, the significance of the *hama* in the distinction between *energeia* and *kinêsis* in *Metaphysics* IX 6: I cannot *hama* be building and have built, but I can *hama* be seeing and have seen. It would be nonsensical to understand the *hama* here as "at the same point in time."

A 1932 lecture, "Der Satz vom Widerspruch," based on the WS1928–29 seminar, has been published in two drafts along with related notes in GA91. The shorter account of *Metaphysics* IV in this lecture is clearly based on the more detailed account in the seminar and does not really add anything to it.

SS1931 Course *Aristoteles, Metaphysik IX, 1–3: Vom Wesen und Wirklichkeit der Kraft (Aristotle, Metaphysics IX, 1–3: On the Essence and Actuality of Force)*: Published as Gesamtausgabe 33.

As already noted, this course is a reading of the first three chapters only of *Metaphysics* IX.[29] This restriction is intentional, as Heidegger claims that the entire book can be interpreted from out of the initial chapters.

[29] This can now be read with contemporaneous notes published in *Gesamtausgabe* 91, *Ergänzungen und Denksplitter*, under the title "Aristoteles: Seinsfrage und 'Metaphysik'—Allgemeines (1930/31)" (3–115).

This means that in Heidegger's view the notions of *dunamis* and *energeia* can be fully interpreted and understood in relation to motion, which is the relation at issue in these early chapters, despite Aristotle's own claim that these are not the senses of *dunamis* and *energeia* most useful to him in the present context (ontology) and his announcement of a transition to a different sense not relative to motion at the start of chapter 6. Here chapter 6 and its distinction between *energeia* and *kinêsis* are completely ignored by Heidegger. This is arguably what enables him to interpret the argument of the book, and specifically Aristotle's debate with the Megarians, as presupposing a conception of being not as "activity," but as presence. In a way that firmly prevents "the breach in ancient ontology" confronted in the SS1928 seminar, Heidegger insists that what is at issue in this debate is the *being-present* of what is *dunaton* (see especially 167). In this context, it should also be noted that the thesis that for the Greeks "being=being-produced" is just as dominant here as it has been in Heidegger's reading of Aristotle since 1922 (see 224, 381). This is the case even though Heidegger, in his discussion at the start of the course of the manifold senses of being in Aristotle, claims to leave open and question-worthy what unifies this manifold and what kind of unity this is (47).

1939 Essay "Vom Wesen und Begriff der Φύσις: Aristoteles, Physik B, 1" ("On the Essence and Concept of Φύσις: Aristotle, Physics B, 1"): Published in *Wegmarken*

As already noted, the focus of the essay is much more limited than that of the WS1923–24 seminar. It is dedicated entirely to the first chapter of Book II of the *Physics*. Heidegger expresses here again the conviction that has made the *Physics* central to his reading of Aristotle from the beginning: "The Aristotelian 'Physics' is the hidden and therefore never adequately thought-through fundamental book of Western philosophy" (WB, 312). This is because he continues to understand being-moved as "the fundamental way of being" (314), though as such, being-moved cannot be understood here ontically as a motion, but rather as "movedness" (*Bewegtheit*): the same word used in *Being and Time* for the movedness that is Dasein's being. As for *energeia*, in an implicit reference to the example of "having seen and still seeing" in *Metaphysics* IX 6, Heidegger speaks of "the *highest* movedness (Bewegtheit) in the *rest* of (simple) seeing gathered within itself" (354). As for *entelecheia*, it is "the essence of κίνησις" (357). With the interpretation of being as movedness, Heidegger continues to claim that the Greeks interpreted being in terms of production and thus as presence. However, a significant shift appears to take place here: first,

Herstellen is distinguished from "making" (Machen) and understood as a letting-come-forth broader than production; secondly, presence is understood now verbally (*Anwesen*, presencing) and therefore distinguished from "mere presence-at-hand" (342).

WS1942–43 Seminar on *Metaphysics* IX 10: Unpublished

This extraordinary seminar appears to have been completely forgotten. No published list of Heidegger's courses and seminars contains it, with one confusing exception: A list compiled by Heidegger himself around 1945 and published in GA86 lists a seminar on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, but for the summer semester of 1943 as well as the summer semester of 1944 (893). The table of contents of GA86 informs us that a protocol for a WS 42/43 seminar on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Part II) is to be found on p. 683. But if we turn to that page, what we find is the protocol of a Hegel seminar in SS1943, with the first class held on May 6, 1943, and therefore nothing of the WS1942–43 seminar that was in fact on Aristotle. That seminar was meant as an excursus between the first seminar on Hegel's *Phenomenology* in SS1942 and the second seminar on the *Phenomenology* in SS1943, the excursus being justified by Heidegger's usual insistence that understanding Hegel requires returning to Aristotle. Probably because it was such an excursus, though a long and very substantial one, it has been overlooked. The only indication of the very existence of the seminar was the publication of notes taken by the Romanian phenomenologist Alexandru Dragomir for only one class held on January 14, 1943 (Dragomir 2004). Yet protocols exist for the seminar that were reviewed and corrected by Heidegger himself (75.7160). While the authors of the protocols are not identified, the fact that the protocol for January 14 is identical to Dragomir's published notes shows that he was one of them.

What makes the seminar extraordinary is, in part, that while Heidegger had already given readings of *Metaphysics* IX, 10,[30] drawn to it because of its identification of the most genuine or most ruling sense of being with being-true, the reading here provides radically different translations/interpretations that emphasize a conception of being as the *movement of presencing* (*Anwesung*)/unconcealing rather than as constant presence

[30] In addition to the WS1925–26 course on logic discussed earlier, a reading of *Metaphysics* IX, 10, was inserted by Heidegger into his SS1930 course "On the Essence of Human Freedom": GA31, section 9.

(*beständige Anwesenheit*). In this context, Heidegger gives an account of Aristotle's definition of motion in the *Physics* fundamentally different from that provided in SS1924: He now insists that the presence of the wood in the carpenter's shop is *not* motion and he translates *entelecheia*/*energeia* in the definition not as *Gegenwart*, but as *Beistellung*.[31] But even more important is the part of the seminar not announced in its title. The culmination of *Metaphysics* IX, 10 in the truth of simple beings existing only in *energeia* leads Heidegger to *Metaphysics* IX, 6 with the goal of elucidating this sense of being. The reading he gives of this latter text must surprise anyone familiar with his reading in the 1924–25 seminar and especially his nonreading in the SS1931 course: emphasizing more than ever the distinction between *energeia* and *kinêsis* (and now finding this distinction in the first sentence of the *Nicomachean Ethics*), he claims that while *energeia*/*dunamis* can be understood from *kinêsis*, their essence reaches beyond *kinêsis* and can be fully understood only from *the being of life*. Heidegger then turns to a detailed translation/interpretation of *De Anima* I, 1 because Aristotle there claims that the study of the soul, as the principle of living things, contributes greatly to the study of *all* truth (or, in Heidegger's translation, "unconcealment as a whole"). Heidegger reaches this important conclusion: "The *kuriôs on* [being in the prevalent sense], for this indeed is being in the manner of *dunamis* and *energeia*, points to *zoê* [life]. What shows itself here is a fundamental connection between being and life that, already anticipated by Plato, runs through and dominates the whole of metaphysics." With that, Heidegger returns to Hegel in the next semester. The suggestion that Aristotle's fundamental ontological concepts, and indeed his conception of the prevalent sense of being, are arrived at from the phenomenon of life is significant because it supports an interpretation we saw Heidegger *dismiss* in the 1922 "Natorp Bericht": that the meaning of being that in the end characterizes the being of human life is genuinely derived by Aristotle from a pure fundamental experience of precisely this object and its being.

[31] The translation in SS1924 is as follows: "Bewegung ist die Gegenwart des Daseienden als Daseinskönnenden, und zwar die Gegenwart sofern es da sein kann" (GA18, 313). Compare WS1942–43: Bewegung ist "das in der Beistellung Wesen des in der Bereitschaft Anwesenden, des Sich-einlassenden, sofern es ein sich Einlassendes ist." The latter certainly goes further in both interpreting the Greek and rendering it more unfamiliar. But this is precisely the intention: to undermine the deceptive self-evidence of a standard translation such as "the actualization of what is potentially, insofar as it is such" (Reeve) so as to force us to puzzle and think about what Aristotle is saying.

SS1944 Seminar on *Metaphysics* IV 1–3 and the Early Chapters of Book VII: Published in *Gesamtausgabe* 83

The discussion of both texts has the same aim: to expose a fundamental ambiguity in Aristotelian ontology. In the description of a science of "being insofar as being" in *Metaphysics* IV, the phrase is ambiguous between verbal (be-ing insofar as be-ing) and nominative meanings (a being insofar as it is a being), as well as between the meaning of being in general and that of the being that most corresponds to the concept of being (see 162, 386, 419). In the case of the discussion in *Metaphysics* VII of *ousia*, identified with the primary sense of being in Book IV, this term is ambiguous between the things that count as *ousia* and what *ousia* itself is (418, 439). These points are not new in Heidegger's reading. What appears to be new is the diagnosis of these ambiguities as a *failure* to raise the question of being, a failure that constitutes the origin of metaphysics as "the overshadowing of being through *beings* [das Seiende] pressing for objectification and ultimate anthropomorphism" (162). Heidegger describes himself as simply pursuing here the destruction of the history of ontology that was projected for the second part of *Being and Time* (420), but the "destruction" seems more negative than before. Even Aristotle's account of truth as the most genuine sense of being in *Metaphysics* IX 10 is now only "the afterglow [Nachglanz] of truth as unconcealment" (436). Heidegger appears to have intended to discuss the principle of noncontradiction in *Metaphysics* IV, which he calls the most puzzling principle of Western philosophy (395), but he never gets to it. Therefore, while here, as in the WS1928–29 course, he claims that the principle should be interpreted neither "logically" nor "ontologically" (470), we do not get here, as we do in the earlier course, the positive alternative.

WS1950–51 Seminar "On Causality": Published in *Gesamtausgabe* 83

This reading of Aristotle along with Kant focuses on the *Physics*. Almost thirty years after his first interpretation of this text, Heidegger still insists that it, and not the *Metaphysics*, is the central text of Western metaphysics (477). Indeed, he states even more forcefully his view that being-moved is an ontological predicate extending to all beings and that "nature" (*phusis*), rather than referring to a particular region of being, is, as the cause of movedness, the nature of being itself. But an important development, anticipated in the 1939 essay and in WS1942/43, that starts from his verbalizing of *Anwesenheit* as *Anwesen* (presencing) is the understanding of

ontological movement as *the movement of presencing itself* (*zum Anwesen selbst die Bewegung gehört*, 484): Heidegger claims this to be Aristotle's decisive advance over Plato. Of great importance to Heidegger here is a sentence from the second chapter of *Physics* I: "Let it be established by us that the things that are according to *phusis* are either all or some in motion (ἡμῖν δ'ὑποκείσθω τὰ φύσει ἢ πάντα ἢ ἔνια κινούμενα εἶναι). This is evident from induction" (185a12–13). He even claims the sentence to be "one of the greatest accomplishments ever carried out in the history of thought" (486)! Yet to get the sentence to say what he wants it to say, Heidegger must dismiss the "or some," first refusing to consider it (487) and then, when apparently challenged by some participants in the course, insisting that "There is in the ἔνια [some] no restriction of the ontological generality of the statement" (489). Furthermore, he must interpret the "all in motion" as meaning, not that all things are in motion, but that motion belongs to the very being=presencing of what is=is present (486; see also 494). This idea of the motion of presencing is in any case an important development, since earlier the presence identified with being was understood as a static being-present-at-hand that results from, or is the product of, movement. This is presumably why Heidegger further breaks from, or transforms, the thesis that being is understood in terms of production: while he continues to see *poiêsis* as paradigmatic, he now insists that it is not "'making' in the sense of manufacturing [*Anfertigen*], but in the completely general sense of 'bringing forth' (*Hervorbringen*)" (502). The rejection here of the term *Anfertigen* is significant given Heidegger's constant use during the 1920s of the words *fertig* and *Fertigkeit* to express the understanding of being derived from the model of production. But this understanding of *poiêsis* as "bringing-forth" makes it only easier to identify *phusis* with *poiêsis*, which Heidegger does (see especially 209).

SS1951 Seminar on *Physics* II 1 and III 1–3: Published in *Gesamtausgabe* 83

The *Physics* is now "the watershed in the fluvial land of Western thinking" (206; see also 209). This is because Heidegger remains of the view that "'being-in-motion' is being in the genuine sense" (529). But Heidegger is here even more forceful than before in insisting that motion not to be understood in an ontic sense. It would be an absurdity to say that Aristotle understood *ousia* as *kinêsis*. Heidegger asserts that instead *ousia* is *energeia* and that the essence of the latter has nothing to do with motion; he even goes so far as to call *energeia* a 'static concept' (542). Yet all this is said in support of a thesis that is not at all new to Heidegger's reading: that the

Greeks, including Aristotle, understood being as being-present-at-hand and from the perspective of *poiêsis*, though Heidegger again insists that this word is to be understood in a "completely broad sense": "('Herstellung', 'Hervorbringung')," 506. If in discussing the four meanings of being (categories, "coincidental," truth, and *dunamis*/*energeia*), he claims that they all presuppose an understanding of being as presence-at-hand, he is not saying anything he did not say in the SS1926 course. There already, as we have seen, he interpreted the primary meaning of being according to the categories, that is, *ousia*, as presence-at-hand, with the other categories being different modalities of being-present-at-hand-with; he took the other three meanings of being as dependent on this first meaning (with *dunamis* and *energeia* being modes of *ousia*). Yet Heidegger's reading appears here to be even more extreme and reductive. This is evident in his claim, not found in the earlier course, that "in all four ways [of being] the ὑποκείμενον remains determinative" (550). The word *hypokeimenon* has the sense of "what lies there before" and therefore is easily identified by Heidegger with being-present-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*). What makes Heidegger's thesis extreme is not just that it has the effect of reducing what Aristotle insists are four distinct meanings of being to one, but that it identifies this meaning with a notion, the *hypokeimenon*, that Aristotle explicitly *rejects* as inadequate even for capturing the meaning of *ousia* (in *Metaphysics* VII, 3). What we have here is less a development of Heidegger's interpretation than its hardening and simplification.

WS1951–52 Seminar on *Physics* III and *Metaphysics* IX 10: Published in *Gesamtausgabe* 83

This final seminar on Aristotle does not break new ground, but rather returns to and recapitulates key features of Heidegger's reading going back decades. The *Physics* remains for Heidegger the central work of Aristotle's ontology because, while he clarifies again that *ousia* cannot be identified with *kinêsis* (how could it be if it is to be understood as *Vorhandenheit*?), it is still with a view to *kinêsis* that the meaning of *ousia* is determined (558); furthermore, Heidegger continues to identify *phusis* with being as such, even though in this seminar he receives some pushback on this point from Ernst Tugendhat (559–562). In returning to *Metaphysics* IX 10, Heidegger provides a reading very much in line with his reading of WS1925–26, though with an emphasis now on the verbal sense of "presencing" that he first introduces into this text in WS1942–43: *Anwesung* rather than *beständige Anwesenheit*. "Truth" is the most genuine sense of being because being is presence, and that which is present

can presence (*an-wesen*) only in an open or undisclosed region: *a-lêthes* (596); thus Heidegger can again take chapter 10 to be the highpoint of the book, rather than an addendum (656–7). There is no further discussion of *Metaphysics* IX, though Heidegger's more "static" conception now of the pair *energeia*/*entelecheia* is evident in his interpretation of the latter as "the pure presence of something completed in itself and so persisting in itself" (595). No hint of activity here! As for the term *energeia* itself, Heidegger, ignoring the identification of *energeia* with action (*praxis*) at the end of IX (Theta) 6, something he emphasized in WS1942–43, instead identifies it with a phrase earlier in that chapter, *huparchein to pragma*, "the obtaining of a thing" (1048a31), and thus with being-present-at-hand. Along the same lines, Heidegger, in returning to Aristotle's account of time, now asserts in a more unqualified way than before that for Aristotle "time" just means "now" (649). A puzzle of these later seminars is that, while we have seen Heidegger broaden the notion of *Herstellung* to mean a "bringing-forth" and verbalize "presence" into "presencing," he appears to become even more unqualified than before in insisting that the Greeks, and therefore Aristotle, reduced being to being-present-at-hand and accordingly time to the "now." Perhaps the reason is that the goal now is less to appropriate Aristotle philosophically in a positive way than to tell a story about the history of metaphysics. This might explain why so much of the seminar is devoted to Descartes and Kant, with the explanation that "Now, we are no longer Greeks, i.e., we can reconstruct their thinking only in contrast to our own manner of thinking. It is therefore necessary first to secure these questions from *our* standpoint" (575; also 585).

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In total, we have thirteen courses or seminars in which Aristotle is the exclusive focus; four in which he is a major focus; six in which one of his texts receives extensive discussion.[32] In addition, we have the 1939 essay, the book proposal, the 1924 and 1932 lectures, and the lecture course that introduced Heidegger's phenomenological interpretations of Aristotle. It is striking that, despite all this constant reflection on Aristotle spanning three decades, the only interpretation of Aristotle Heidegger published during his lifetime was the 1939 essay. It is also surprising that, despite the many seminars and courses on Aristotle that preceded *Being and Time* and clearly prepared its conceptual ground, indeed, despite the fact that

[32] I do not include here a text like the WS1937/38 course (GA45) where there is broad discussion of Aristotelian concepts (his conception of ἀληθεία in particular), but with no detailed interpretation of any of his texts.

what Heidegger began writing with the aim of understanding the facticity of human life was a book *on Aristotle*, Aristotle receives scant mention in Heidegger's major publication. While there is a passing reference to Aristotle's account of the *pathê*, which was a focus in the SS1924 course, as well as a reference to Aristotle's account of time in the *Physics*, which we can see *not* to have been a topic of interest to Heidegger in his reading of Aristotle before *Being and Time*, there is no acknowledgment of the major debts this work owes to Aristotle. To summarize some of them here: If in *Being and Time* Heidegger characterizes our being (Dasein) as a *being-possible* to distinguish it from the being-present of what is "at hand" (vorhanden) or "to hand" (zuhanden), this being-possible is an appropriation of Aristotle's concept of *dunamis*, with the "significance" that characterizes Dasein's world being an interpretation of Aristotle's *dunamei on*; the general understanding of Dasein's "movedness" (Bewegtheit) is derived from the account of *kinêsis* in Aristotle's *Physics*; the analysis of being-in-the-world in terms of dealing with "equipment" is guided by Aristotle's account of *poiêsis*; the interpretation of Dasein's being as *care* certainly owes more to Aristotle's notion of *praxis* than to the Latin fable of "cura" Heidegger actually cites (197–198); the analysis of 'conscience' as in its call making Dasein manifest in its ontological and temporal structure owes a clear debt to Aristotle's account of *phronêsis* as admitting no *lêthê* ("forgetfulness"), a debt acknowledged in the SS1923 and SS1924 courses, but not in *Being and Time* itself, not even in the long note dedicated to prior interpretations of "conscience" (273n3). It is as if Heidegger's philosophical appropriation of Aristotle in *Being and Time* was so deep and pervasive as to render any explicit reference to Aristotle otiose. Yet this did not prevent the engagement with Aristotle to continue just as intensely immediately after, and indeed during, the writing of *Being and Time* and for decades thereafter.[33]

From this survey we can also identify the Aristotelian texts and parts thereof that received detailed treatment by Heidegger:

1) *De Anima* I, 1; II, 1–2, 5, 7; III 9
2) *Nicomachean Ethics* I; II; VI
3) *Metaphysics* I, 1–2; IV, 1–4; V [isolated chapters]; VII, 1–9; IX, 1–6, 10
4) *Physics* I, 1–4; II, 1–7; III, 1–2; IV, 10–14

[33] We know now that Volpi was wrong in claiming that Aristotle ceased to be of much importance to Heidegger from the 1930s on and that the 1939 essay was Heidegger's last "organic confrontation" with Aristotle (Volpi 2010, 13, 16).

5) *Rhetoric* I, 1–3; II, 1, 5
6) *Parts of Animals* I, 1
7) *On Interpretation (peri hermêneias)*, 1–5

Other texts, of course, are cited and briefly discussed throughout Heidegger's work.

Among the texts that receive detailed treatment by Heidegger, the *Physics* is clearly and by far the most central to his reading, being the text to which he returns again and again and always as a focus of extensive commentary. The early chapters of Books I and II are of continual interest to Heidegger, while the account of time in Book IV receives substantial attention only in the period immediately surrounding the publication of *Being and Time*. It is Book III, however, that is at the center of his reading of the *Physics*. From this we can already gather that the thematic focus of Heidegger's reading of Aristotle, from beginning to end, is being-in-motion. Indeed, Heidegger's account of our being as a peculiar kind of movement and being-possible in *Being and Time* appears to be only a passing moment in a reflection on being-in-motion in Aristotle that preceded this work, immediately followed it in the 1928 seminar, and continued to occupy him after the war in the 1950s. One can well understand why Heidegger would tell Thomas Sheehan, as late as 1971, that, along with Husserl's account of the categorial intuition of being, the other influence at the heart of his thinking was Aristotle's doctrine of *kinêsis* in the *Physics* (Sheehan 2024, 361). In the context of this continuous focus on the *Physics*, we see a significant change in the other texts receiving substantial consideration: *De Anima*, which inaugurated Heidegger's intense engagement with Aristotle, is soon replaced by the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which becomes a major focus in the period leading to *Being and Time*; after *Being and Time*, however, the *Ethics* in turn completely disappears from Heidegger's reading of Aristotle. It is as if, with *Being and Time*, Heidegger had gotten everything he could get out of Aristotle's ethics. As for the *Metaphysics*, it is certainly of secondary interest relative to the *Physics*, but is always there in Heidegger's reading, from beginning to end. As in the case of the *Physics*, Heidegger's reading of the *Metaphysics* is very selective. Despite an earlier interest in the first two chapters of Book I and regular references to Book IV, it is Book VII that received the most substantial and continual treatment, with Book IX also being given special importance. This means a focus on the problem of *ousia* and on the conceptual pair *dunamis*/*energeia*.

As for how Heidegger reads Aristotle's texts, we see that a constant guiding assumption since 1922 is that Aristotle understood being from the

perspective of production and therefore as presence. Yet two important points need to be made here. First, we have seen that the understanding of both the terms "presence" and "production" in the thesis undergoes a change after the 1920s, with "presence" being understood more as "presencing" (*An-wesen*) than as "being-present-at-hand" (*Vorhandenheit*) and "production" (*poiêsis*) more as "bringing-forth" (Hervorbringung) than as "making" (*Machen*). Secondly, Heidegger's thesis is not simply "critical," but rather "destructive" in his sense: if a conception of being as "presence" emerges from the productive movement of Dasein, then Aristotle's thought itself, in placing movement at the heart of the understanding of being, enables us to get beyond the conception of being as presence. The movement of the things we produce and use, and our understanding of what it means for them to be in movement and simply to be, is grounded in the movement that we ourselves are. Through "destroying" Aristotle, we can arrive at a better understanding of this more fundamental ("absolute") movement in which his own thought is grounded and to which it therefore points. As Heidegger says in one of the later seminars, though in connection to the text *On Interpretation* which he seeks to free from the tradition of interpretation: "This is what I earlier called 'Destruction'. One therefore thinks that Heidegger is a destructive man. But the meaning of destruction is coming to the ground [auf den Boden zu kommen]" (GA83, 647). Yet we also see that this "destruction" depends on the mentioned assumption or hypothesis that being for the Greeks equals "being-produced" and therefore presence. If this thesis is being imposed onto Aristotle's text – and some indication has been given of moments where this is what appears to be taking place – then what it produces is not a liberating "destruction," but a suppression and occlusion of *other possibilities* these texts might preserve. The questions that need to be asked here are the topic of the next section.

3 Questions Raised by Heidegger's Reading of Aristotle

There is a tendency in the secondary literature on Heidegger's reading of Aristotle to assume, without explicitly claiming, that Heidegger cannot be wrong. The implicit reasoning is that Heidegger is not trying to get Aristotle "right," that is, that he is not trying to reproduce accurately what Aristotle "says." Instead, Heidegger is engaged in a project of "destruction" meant to liberate from Aristotle's text something of which Aristotle was not himself aware, indeed, something which Aristotle's explicit claims only tended to *cover up*. All this reasoning is undoubtedly true. But the question that

generally does not get asked is the following: *What if what Heidegger claims is there implicitly in the text is actually not there*? We ended the last section with the central thesis that Heidegger "reads into" Aristotle's texts while acknowledging that it is not something Aristotle ever explicitly says: that is, that being equals being-produced. This understanding of being may indeed be implicitly present in Aristotle's texts, presupposed in everything he says without himself being aware of it, much less explicitly defending it. *But it may also not be*. Heidegger himself in the early seminars characterizes the thesis that for Aristotle (and for the Greeks) being = being-produced as a *hypothesis*. But a hypothesis can be wrong. And it is not the case that, because we are dealing here with a hypothesis about what is implicit rather than explicit in the texts, it can be neither confirmed nor refuted. As Heidegger himself notes at the beginning of his lecture *Plato's Doctrine of Truth*, we can get at a thinker's "unsaid" only by "considering" (bedenken) what he says (GA91, 203). In the case of Aristotle, Heidegger in the seminars characterizes certain passages in the texts as confirming his hypothesis. But then it must be at least in principle possible to find passages that refute, or at least seriously bring into question the hypothesis. Claiming "destruction" as a philosophical method does not or should not place one beyond critical assessment. As is hardly ever noted but needs to be repeated often, *destruction can err*.[34] How so? It is clearly in principle possible that in "destructing" an ancient text I in turn "construct" a doctrine that itself covers up or obscures the fundamental experience of being implicit in the text.[35] The question that needs to be asked, though it hardly ever is, is the following: Is the hypothesis that being equals being-produced for Aristotle the result of "destruction" or just another "construction"?[36]

[34] I find in Kirkland's otherwise perceptive and helpful account of Heidegger's "destruction" of Aristotle (2023) no acknowledgment of the possibility that this "destruction" can err and is itself in need of a "destruction." Thus, in repeating throughout Heidegger's claim that Aristotle experienced being as constant presence, he does not seem to consider the possibility that Heidegger is wrong about this, that this claim is an over-hasty and simplistic inference from the ordinary meaning of *ousia* and the kinds of examples (often drawn from the field of production) Aristotle uses.

[35] I suspect that Heidegger would grant that "destruction" *always* errs, since it is impossible for an interpretation to free a text from later constructions without itself producing new constructs that will themselves in turn need to be "destructed" by future readers.

[36] Much more attention needs to be paid to an important exchange in the "Dialogue on Language: Between a Japanese and an Inquirer." When the Japanese inquirer defends in a way now common Heidegger's relation to the history of philosophy, claiming that what Heidegger strives for is not negation but an original appropriation, Heidegger immediately adds: "Whose success can and should be disputed" (GA12, 104). Yet one finds surprisingly little in the secondary literature disputing the success of Heidegger's original appropriation of Aristotle or even acknowledging that doing so is something possible and worthwhile.

This space for critique needs to be held open since, otherwise, faced with Heidegger's reading of Aristotle, we are confined to the philosophically unproductive and uninteresting response of simply reproducing this reading and finding it congenial or not. It is surprising that those who evaluate positively Heidegger's way of reading "destructively" Aristotle and other texts in the history of philosophy appear to assume that such "destruction" cannot and should not be performed on Heidegger's own texts. Why should the way in which we read Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle differ from the way in which Heidegger reads the medieval reception of Aristotle, that is, "destructively"? Heidegger's interpretation is just another "repetition" of Aristotle that cannot and should not have the last word. Only when we recognize this, do we allow Aristotle's texts to resist Heidegger's reading in a way that allows this reading to raise fundamental questions about both thinkers and ultimately about the phenomena which both are seeking to interpret. "Heidegger's Aristotle," like "Aquinas's Aristotle," is an object of study for historians. What should interest the philosopher is Heidegger *and* Aristotle, where all the philosophical interest and provocation lies in that "and." This "and" requires a separation between Heidegger and Aristotle: a separation that makes it at least possible for Heidegger to get wrong, or at least fail to grasp fully, the fundamental concepts at work in Aristotle. Judging this requires not only that we ourselves read Aristotle but also that we ourselves grapple with the phenomena at issue *between* Heidegger and Aristotle.

Before turning, however, to what Heidegger might miss in Aristotle or cover up through a questionable construction, we should seek to identify what his destruction of the traditional reception of Aristotle liberates in Aristotle's texts, enabling Aristotle to speak to us again with new possibilities of philosophizing. One thing he liberates is precisely how Aristotle speaks to us and what he takes speaking to be. A traditional conception of Aristotle is as the father of logic for whom truth and falsehood are properties of statements and truth is generated through certain combinations of statements (the forms of syllogism). Science proceeds through, and knowledge consists of, logical demonstrations. But what Heidegger draws to our attention is that for Aristotle truth is not confined to propositions: a perception or intellectual intuition can be *true*. But even a statement can be true only because it is "apophantic," that is, because it has the function of letting something show itself from itself. The truth of a statement is derived from the "truth" of that which it is about showing itself as it is. Truth is not so much a property a statement has as rather what it *does* in making something manifest. This is why Aristotle, unlike us today, can make "truth"

a verb: in *Nicomachean Ethics* VI 3 he says of the soul that it *alêtheuei*, it "trues." And a statement can be "true" in making something manifest because "truth" is first and foremost the characteristic a being can have of showing itself, of being unconcealed or unhidden. This is why Aristotle can say, in the text of *Metaphysics* IX 10 to which Heidegger returns again and again, that truth (and falsehood) is not only a sense of being (and not being) but also the ruling or dominant sense. But this furthermore explains how Aristotle himself speaks to us in the treatises. Scholars often express surprise that Aristotle's treatises do not take the form of logical demonstrations given that this is how he appears to conceive of science. Indeed, what we find Aristotle doing in his treatises is not demonstrating conclusions on the basis of premises in the form of a syllogism, but rather speaking in such a way as to allow the things to show themselves as they are. His *logoi* are meant to respond to how things show themselves. If, for example, life shows itself in many different ways (in nutrition, perception, etc.), a logos about life (or the soul) must be appropriate to these different manifestations. As Heidegger rightly contends, Aristotle is a *phenomenologist avant la lettre*, not a theorist constructing proofs.

Another thing Heidegger's reading can be said to do is bring Aristotle's ontology to life in recognizing the central role life plays within it. Not only does he recognize in *De Anima* an ontology of life, that is, a reflection on what it means to *be alive*, rather than some specialized inquiry into "psychology," but he also recognizes that life is the paradigmatic object of Aristotle's science of being as such and that for Aristotle ontology is itself a form of life. If Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* claims that god is both the object of this science and the subject that carries out this science (983a5–10), god is a living being. Aristotle's metaphysics is quite literally life reflecting upon life. If scholars have started to speak of "Aristotle's biological ontology" or "Aristotle's biological metaphysics,"[37] Heidegger saw the truth of such a characterization already in 1921 and arguably in a much more original and radical way. Heidegger also saw that Aristotle's challenge in giving an account of the being of life is that he recognized life to be not only a motion but also a motion of a peculiar kind, a motion that does not involve *alteration* as does, for example, the motion of water boiling or a house being built.

Heidegger's reading has the great merit of restoring the *Physics* to the status of a great work of philosophy rather than a relic of outdated science. He can do so because he recognizes that Aristotle's text, rather than

[37] See, for example, Kosman 2013, 120–121.

being superseded by modern physics, is doing something *completely different* which modern physics simply stopped doing in making motion an object of calculation completely external to the bodies in motion: that is, attempting to understand the *being of motion* as an *internal* characteristic of things existing according to nature. Aristotle's *Physics* is a work of *ontology* because it seeks not to calculate, predict, and control motion, but rather to understand motion as constituting the being of natural beings. If modern physicists do not read Aristotle, it is not so much because Aristotle has been superseded (even if he undoubtedly has on many points), but because the command often associated with modern physics, even if of questionable attribution, still captures something essential to its approach: "Shut up and calculate!" Philosophers, of course, should not shut up and calculate, and Aristotle's *Physics* can give us much to talk about.

Of the different ways in which being is said according to Aristotle, being in the sense of the categories and therefore "substance" (*ousia*) as first among the categories is the one that tends to receive the major focus in contemporary accounts of Aristotle's metaphysics, to the extent that it appears to be considered the only true sense of being, the others being purely derivative and secondary. Heidegger himself generally follows this tendency, but he also often recognizes that the categories, including substance, are themselves one sense of being among others and that at least one other sense is equal if not even superior in importance: being in the sense of *energeia*/*entelecheia* and *dunamis*. Heidegger certainly sees the terms *energeia* and *entelecheia* as expressing something about the meaning of being that *ousia* itself does not: What that is he tries to capture through several attempts at translation and explication through the years, even if ultimately, in his own view, without complete success. In his last seminar on Aristotle (WS1951–52), and thus at the end of three decades of teaching Aristotle, Heidegger is recorded as asking his students: "How are we supposed to deal with something that we do not at all understand? Or do you understand what ἐντελέχεια means? I don't" (617). This perplexity regarding Aristotle's central ontological concept must be considered a *positive* legacy Heidegger has left us. As for *dunamis*, Heidegger makes this notion central to Aristotle's ontology and recognizes, if not always and consistently, that *dunamis* expresses a way of being not reducible to a static being-present. Indeed, it is clearly Heidegger's interpretation of this notion in Aristotle that enables him in *Being and Time* to distinguish the way of being of *Dasein* from being-present-at-hand by characterizing it as a "being-possible." An important legacy of Heidegger's reading of

Aristotle is making us recognize the central importance of, as well as the extreme difficulty in comprehending, being in the sense of *dunamis* and *energeia*. And this he can do only by destroying the tradition's stultifying reduction of these terms to "potentiality" and "actuality."

Heidegger's reading of the *Nicomachean Ethics* could not be more different than the readings one finds in contemporary Aristotelian studies. While the latter seek in this work an "ethics" in the modern sense of how we should act and what our goals should be, Heidegger instead seeks in it an ontology of being human. This is not as perverse as it might initially appear and indeed provides an important corrective to the more common modern readings. The fact is that Aristotle's account of human happiness in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, including the central role he assigns to character in achieving this happiness, is premised on an account of the *function* that distinguishes human beings from other beings and the claim that our ultimate end is the excellent performance of this function. This argument is not an "ethical" argument in the modern sense, but rather an ontological argument meant to ground a certain kind of ethics. To abstract Aristotle's account of virtuous character and action from his account of what it means to be human is to uproot it from its source and to blind ourselves to what is decidedly unmodern, and therefore both problematic and philosophically provocative, in this text. Heidegger, in contrast, seeks to uncover precisely what the text presupposes or claims about being human and allow this to provoke our own reflection on what it means for us to exist as human beings. Ethics, for Aristotle as well as for Heidegger, cannot ignore ontology.

What is striking is that all these things Heidegger's destruction uncovers in Aristotle's texts are simultaneously covered up by it. If Heidegger rightly stresses the "apophantic" character of *logos* in Aristotle and finds in him a fundamental conception of truth as the self-showing or unconcealment of beings, he disregards Aristotle's contributions to logic, not only for want of time or interest but also clearly because he considers Aristotle's logical works as a degeneration from genuine philosophy. In other words, Heidegger's insight into the *derivation* of Aristotelian logic from a more fundamental conception of *logos* and truth becomes, especially in his later readings, a thesis that *opposes* the two, equating logic with a *reduction* of truth to the property a statement can have of being correct. In short, the derivation becomes a *transformation* in the essence of truth where the logical writings presumably stand on the wrong side of the transformation. And if Heidegger rightly notes the phenomenological character of

Aristotle's method, he mostly ignores the role that logical demonstration *does* play in Aristotle's treatises.[38]

If Heidegger in 1921 recognized that "the biological is for him (Aristotle) the fundamental beginning of knowledge" and even appears, as already noted, to have had the intention of teaching a seminar on Aristotle's biological writings, this is quickly forgotten as his reading of Aristotle and his own thought focus exclusively on human life to which, by the writing of *Being and Time*, the term "life" is denied to distinguish it from "mere life" (thus the need for the technical designation "Dasein"). Indeed, living beings are lost sight of altogether when Heidegger makes, both for Aristotle and himself, human productive activity the ontological paradigm. As has been noted, the thesis that being equals being-produced for Aristotle *postdates* the seminar on *De Anima*.

As for the distinctive kind of "motion" that characterizes life, if Heidegger is aware that for Aristotle this is *energeia* and that *energeia* is strictly to be distinguished from *kinêsis*, Heidegger's reading repeatedly elides this distinction in order to make *kinêsis* the fundamental phenomenon of which *energeia* is only a derivation. For Aristotle, in contrast, *kinêsis* is an incomplete *energeia* and thus itself the derivative phenomenon. When Helene Weiss in her own book (1942) interprets Aristotle's distinction between *kinêsis* and *energeia* in *Metaphysics* IX 6 as a distinction between *kinêsis atelês* ("incomplete motion") and *teleia kinêsis* ("complete motion"; 103; see also 145), she is being faithful to Heidegger's reading but completely unfaithful to Aristotle. The Ancient Greek thinker not only never speaks of a "complete motion" (*teleia kinêsis*) but would dismiss the phrase as an absurdity: motion is for Aristotle *as such* incomplete and can never be complete; *energeia*, in contrast, is *as such* complete, so that motion must necessarily *fall short of* being *energeia*, can only be an *incomplete energeia*. In short, while *kinêsis* is a deficient *energeia*, *energeia* is *not* a complete motion (there is no such thing), but rather not a motion at all. From the fact that *energeia* is not *kinêsis*, however, we should not draw the conclusion, as another tendency of Heidegger's reading does, that it is to be understood as some kind of static presence. *Energeia* is

[38] Volpi 1996 shows how Heidegger "interprète toutes les notions linguistiques d'Aristote comme des déterminations ontologiques" (42). Volpi notes that "Les déterminations ontiques traditionnelles de la vie humaine – entre autre [*sic*] le λόγος – indiquement normalement, de manière positive, des possibilités et des capacités dont l'homme peut disposer par un acte voluntaire" (64), while "La stratégie heideggérienne de confrontation avec le texte aristotélicienne se laisse caractériser comme une radicalisation obtenue par une 'ontologisation' du cadre aristotélicien et ses composantes" (63). The important question is what is lost in this "ontologization."

activity, is what we *do*, what the unmoved mover *does*, as *living* beings, and for Aristotle such activity is fundamentally misunderstood if interpreted as a kind of motion.

In the passage from *Metaphysics* Theta IX, what Aristotle initially distinguishes from *kinêsis*, before substituting the word *energeia*, is indeed *action* (*praxis*). Another way in which Heidegger's reading of Aristotle can be seen as obstructive rather than destructive is in its consistent suppression of a distinction Aristotle repeatedly insists on: that between *praxis* and *poiêsis*, "production," which itself is a kind of motion. It is indeed on this suppression that depends Heidegger's thesis that Aristotle equated being with being-produced. What arguably for Aristotle counts as being in the strictest sense is activity/action that possesses its end within itself. The process of producing a house is directed toward an end completely outside itself. The produced house itself is an end, but only in relation to a process or to activities completely external to it: It is not itself active and in possession of its own end. Thus, both production and the product prove deficient when compared to the end-possessing activity/action that Aristotle constantly opposes to them. Yet it is the notion of *praxis* as distinct from *poiêsis* that Heidegger's reading of Aristotle, and arguably even his own thought, suppresses in constructing and imposing on the text a conception of being modelled on production.

As argued earlier, Heidegger is justified in treating the *Physics* as a work of ontology. Here we can add that the distinction between "physics" and "metaphysics" was unknown to Aristotle but is the product of an editorial decision ("*meta*-physics" was the title given to those treatises that came *after* the physical treatises in the edition of Aristotle's works that gave them their current form). However, Aristotle *does* distinguish natural science from what he calls "first philosophy." The reason for the distinction is that physics, in dealing with natural beings defined as having their source of motion in themselves, *does not deal with all beings*, which is the scope of first philosophy. Specifically, physics does not deal with *unmoved beings* and this limitation of its scope prevents it from being the science of *beings insofar as they are beings*. Heidegger can make the *Physics the* central work of Aristotelian ontology only by ignoring this distinction, that is, by making motion the defining characteristic of *all* beings as beings. How can he do this? While he of course recognizes that for Aristotle there are "unmoved" beings studied by "metaphysics," he treats "unmoved" here as simply a *privation* of motion. What is unmoved can only be understood as such from the perspective of motion. But what Heidegger misses here is that what Aristotle describes as "unmoved" also has the *positive*

characterization of *energeia* where this notion, as already argued, is not derived from the phenomenon of motion; on the contrary, it is motion that is seen as a deficiency or privation of *energeia*. In this case what Aristotle calls "first philosophy" is indeed *first* and cannot be reduced or subordinated to physics.

If Heidegger is right to insist that the manifold senses of being in Aristotle extend beyond being according to the categories, he in the end reduces all these senses to the primary category, *ousia*, understood as presence. Furthermore, this understanding of *ousia* itself involves a further reduction of the manifold senses of *ousia* to one: the *hypokeimenon* as what lies there before us and, in *underlying* all change, is constantly present (see GA18, 29–35). This goes against Aristotle's own rejection in *Metaphysics* VII 3 of the *hypokeimenon* as being the primary sense of *ousia* because it has the effect of reducing *ousia* to indeterminate matter. Here Heidegger can be said to suppress the most philosophically productive problem in Aristotle's metaphysical texts, that is, the problem of what unifies the manifold senses of being (each of which is itself a manifold of senses), by giving it a dogmatic solution and arguably the least plausible. If one had to identify a dominant sense of being among the manifold senses, it would be *energeia*: but even *energeia* is, according to Aristotle, spoken in different ways, united only by analogy (*Met*. IX.6 1048b6–7)!

As for Aristotle's *Ethics*, in rightly drawing attention to the ontological basis of Aristotle's ethics, Heidegger ends up suppressing the ethical dimension altogether. While in the 1922 prospectus for the book on Aristotle Heidegger tells us that his interpretation of *Nicomachean Ethics* 6 will be carried out "with a preliminary disregard for the specifically ethical problematic" (GA62, 376), what is described here as preliminary ends up being permanent: Heidegger never returns to the specifically ethical problematic in Aristotle's thought, just as his own thought never finds its way to a specifically ethical reflection. This does not appear to be a mere oversight. If, for example, one insists, as Heidegger repeatedly does, that the notion of *telos* in Aristotle does not at all have the meaning of "goal" or "aim," but only the ontological meaning of "limit," it is hard to see how one could return to the specifically ethical role of this term. If one likewise reduces the notion of the *agathon* to that of "limit" (see, e.g., GA18, 69) or even goes so far as to claim, as Heidegger does in the SS1923 seminar on *Nicomachean Ethics* I, that "The concept of the ἀγαθόν is not the genuine and central one" (WNE, 2), but rather *telos* understood as 'limit', it is hard to see how one could return to a notion of the good that has ethical import. I have shown elsewhere how all of Aristotle's ethical concepts undergo this

kind of "ontologizing" in Heidegger's reading (Gonzalez 2006b), and so radically that there seems to be no way of returning them to ethics. One finds in Heidegger's reading of Aristotle what some have found in *Being and Time*: ethically charged language deprived of any determinate ethical content. What is arguably lost or obscured here is Aristotle's ability to develop on an ontological foundation an ethics that is fully responsive to the demands and contingencies of not only acting but also of acting in the best way in a determinate situation.

Something finally needs to be said about Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle on time. Here too Heidegger's reading is simultaneously "destructive" in a positive sense and obstructive. Interpreting Aristotle's definition of time in the *Physics* as "the number of motion with respect to before and after," he returns it to its ground in our ordinary dealings with time and thereby provides it with a certain justification. On the other hand, his identification of this conception of time with that of a series of successively present nows ("eine Folge von Jetzt," GA24, 362) appears extremely reductive and at odds with Aristotle's own account of the "now" as *not* being a part of time, as the point is not part of the line, but rather being what at once divides and unifies time (220a4–5). But what Heidegger's reading most suppresses are conceptions of time in Aristotle distinct from the definition given in the *Physics*. Heidegger himself finds in the account of *tuchê* and the *automaton* in the central chapters of *Physics* II an insight into the nature of temporality, which he claims would not be equaled later. Heidegger also recognizes a unique sense of temporality in Aristotle's claim of the simultaneity of perfect and present tenses in the case of an *energeia*: I simultaneously am seeing and have seen, while I cannot simultaneously be building a house and have built the house. With this simultaneity of perfect and present tenses, *energeia* is not *in* time as time is defined in the *Physics*. Heidegger is also certainly aware of the central role played by the notion of the "opportune moment" or *kairos* in Aristotle's account of action: A notion that again clearly cannot be reduced to the conception of time defined in the *Physics*. Finally, according to Heidegger's own account of the principle of noncontradiction, the *hama* that plays such a key role in it cannot be understood as meaning "at the same point within time." Yet despite being thus aware of the different forms of temporality that appear in Aristotle's texts, when Heidegger speaks of Aristotle's conception of time, it is reduced to the definition in the *Physics*. The observations concerning the temporality of *tuchê* and what he calls the "peculiar perfect" that characterizes the temporality of *energeia* are made once and then forgotten.

We have focused so far on what becomes of Aristotle in the confrontation expressed in the phrase "Heidegger and Aristotle." But what does this confrontation tell us about Heidegger? Or more importantly, what questions does it raise concerning his own thought? In fact, in noting certain limits in Heidegger's reading of Aristotle, it is hard not to see these limits reflected in his own thought. This is no accident given that, especially during the 1920s, no sharp line can be drawn between Heidegger's reading of Aristotle and the development of his own thought. His relative neglect of Aristotle's logic is reflected in his own ambiguous and problematic relation to logic.[39] If *De Anima* recedes in importance from his reading of Aristotle, this is because Heidegger turns away from the task of developing an ontology of life as such to the task of working out an ontological analysis of our own being. The result is that "life" becomes in *Being and Time* "mere living" (*nur lebendes*) that can be interpreted only privatively from the perspective of *Dasein*. When Heidegger provides such a privative interpretation in the *Basic Concepts of Metaphysics* course of 1929–1930, it does not even pretend to provide a *positive* interpretation of life since it admittedly fails to give an account of the "being-moved" (*Bewegtsein*) that defines life as such (see GA29/30, 385–387). If Heidegger weakens or undermines Aristotle's distinction between *energeia* and *kinêsis*, this is because movedness (*Bewegtheit*) will prove central to his own account of being (and of our own being in particular). If he weakens or undermines Aristotle's distinction between *praxis* and *poiêsis*, and especially the priority Aristotle grants the former, this is because it is *poiêsis* that will guide Heidegger's own thought, from the interpretation of Dasein's being-in-the-world in terms of productive comportment in *Being and Time* to the *Origin of the Work of Art* to *The Essay Concerning Technology*. If he collapses Aristotle's distinction between "first philosophy" and "natural science," this is because of his own project of overcoming metaphysics. If Heidegger reduces Aristotle's manifold senses of being, each itself containing another manifold, to one sense, this is because he himself sought, at least during the 1920s, to arrive at *the meaning* of being. Significantly, when Heidegger later tells his "origin" story of receiving while still in high school the book by Franz Brentano on the manifold sense of being in Aristotle, the lifelong question he describes it as having ignited is the

[39] For an excellent account that shows particularly well this problematic and Heidegger's evolving relation to logic, see Courtine 1996. Courtine asks in conclusion whether logic and its fundamental principles have really been transcended in Heidegger and whether he in the end succeeds in giving an adequate response to the question of "What is the logical?" (31)

question concerning what is simple and one in this manifold ("Frage nach dem *Einfachen* des *Mannigfachen* im Sein," GA1, 56).[40] But what if, as Aristotle appears to have maintained, there is no simple sense unifying this manifold? If Heidegger not only momentarily puts aside but makes disappear altogether the specifically ethical problematic in Aristotle, this is due to his conviction that ethics, and not only modern "value-thinking" but any thinking in terms of goals or aims, is a result of the failure to think the meaning of being. In the language of *Being and Time*, "ethics," like "politics," is inherently inauthentic (or put another way: an authentic ethics and politics would be one void of any specifically ethical and political, as distinct from ontological, content). If Heidegger gives a reductive account of Aristotle's conception of time, this is because he himself gives an arguably reductive account of "world-time" to oppose it to a more radical and original temporality. What we see here is that to question Heidegger's reading of Aristotle is to question central moves in his own thought. This is why it cannot be simply a matter of judging Heidegger as an interpreter of Aristotle, as if this were something he did on the side, but rather a matter of judging Heidegger as an interpreter of the phenomena themselves at issue in the confrontation between Heidegger and Aristotle.

The previous comments should not be understood as a defense of Aristotle against Heidegger. They simply represent an attempt to return the word to Aristotle, given that Heidegger has up until now had the last word in his confrontation with Aristotle. They are also meant to be a corrective to the tendency in the literature to put all the emphasis with Heidegger on what Aristotle failed to see without even considering what Heidegger might have failed to see. Again, it is not "Heidegger's Aristotle" that is of the greatest philosophical interest, but rather the "and" in "Heidegger *and* Aristotle": an "and" that should never become a simple "or" but should also never be rid of tension and difference. In this case, studying Heidegger on/and Aristotle can make us better understand both, which means better understanding their *limits*, since the primary object of interpretation here is neither Heidegger nor Aristotle, but the phenomena they themselves *attempted* to interpret. What we need are *phenomenological interpretations with respect to (zu) Heidegger and Aristotle*. The present *Element* is only an invitation for future studies with such a title.

[40] Likewise, in the preface to Richardson 1963, Heidegger tells us that latent in the phrase τὸ ὂν λέγεται πολλαχῶς, which Brentano put on the title page of his book, "is the *question* that determined the way of my thought: what is the pervasive simple unified determination of Being that permeates all of its multiple meanings?" (x)

Bibliography: Current Scholarship on Heidegger and Aristotle

By far the most comprehensive study of Heidegger and Aristotle to date is the excellent book by Yfantis (2009), but it does not go beyond 1927 and, even for the 1920s, it does not consider the many unpublished seminars surveyed in chapter two and discussed in detail in Gonzalez 2024a. The groundbreaking book by Volpi 1984a was ahead of its time in both the good sense of that phrase and the bad sense of being written before most of Heidegger's major courses on Aristotle were published. If it is still worth reading today, this is because the publication of these courses has only confirmed the conclusions Volpi already defended with extraordinary insight and foresight.[41] The major books in English are Sadler 1996, Brogan 2005, and Kirkland 2023. They all approach the relation between Heidegger and Aristotle from a specific angle and therefore do not consider even all of Heidegger's readings of Aristotle already published when they were written. It is also fair to say that Sadler and Brogan are more interested in comparing/contrasting Aristotle and Heidegger than in giving a detailed analysis of Heidegger's own reading of Aristotle. Kirkland 2023 is more focused on Heidegger's reading of Aristotle, but specifically on Heidegger's strategy of 'destruction' and especially as applied to Aristotle's concept of substance. Bowler 2008, despite the title, addresses Heidegger's reading of Aristotle only briefly in a final chapter. There are also in languages other than English several book-length studies of specific themes and texts in Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle. Finally, many articles have been published, especially in recent years, focusing on a specific question in the relation between Heidegger and Aristotle, and some of the more recent ones have started to take account of the unpublished seminars. The following bibliography, while certainly not complete and excluding broader studies in which Heidegger's reading of Aristotle may partially factor, can still claim to be the most comprehensive published to date.

[41] For a very helpful assessment of both the contribution and limitations of Volpi's groundbreaking book, see Torres 2024.

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